Siegfried Greif · Heidi Möller ·
Wolfgang Scholl · Jonathan Passmore ·
Felix Müller   *Editors*

International Handbook of Evidence-Based Coaching

Theory, Research and Practice

Springer

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Preface

The original inspiration for this handbook came from discussions with academics and coaching practitioners at the European Association of Work and Organizational Psychology (EAWOP) Congress in Münster, Germany, in May 2013. A position paper on "Coaching – Practice or science based?" (Greif, 2013) traced the history of coaching and its relationship to science. An analysis of the 50 coach training programs in the USA, UK, and Germany most popular on the Internet at that time showed that references to scientific foundations or evidence-based coaching are very rare, in the USA and Germany only in 2% and 4% and in the UK at least 13% of the cases.

We developed a plan to publish a handbook with contributions from experts from both science and practice, which contribute to the further development of evidence-based coaching by providing current, scientifically founded, and practically applicable knowledge for coaches and coaching trainings. A first edition of the handbook has been published in German (Greif et al., 2018). From the beginning, however, we planned an expanded international edition in English and looked for distinguished authors from many countries. We are happy to have been able to inspire our coeditors, Jonathan Passmore and Felix Müller, to make our joint *International Handbook of Evidence Based Coaching* happen and to help us attract more international authors.

In our handbook, we have chosen to focus on basic scientific constructs, theories, and evidence for coaching rather than on the practical coaching methods or coaching schools. However, we have placed the maximum emphasis on ensuring that each individual contribution begins with a practical example from coaching and, in addition to the scientific foundations, always describes practical applications and demonstrates the importance of the scientific foundations for coaching practice. It was important that all relevant scientific disciplines are included. The presentations in our handbook show that scientific research deals with extremely diverse questions that are of high interest for coaching and are by no means as dry and distant from practice as some people might assume.

We would like to thank our authors who share with you, the reader, in more than 70 contributions their impressive knowledge. They come from many European countries, such as Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Great Britain, the Netherlands, and Denmark, as well as from the USA, Australia, South Africa, and Asia. As editors and reviewers, we were the first readers of their contributions and realized the great increase in knowledge made possible by reading them. Subsequently, we have tried out some of the suggestions ourselves in practice and have brought much of it into our own coaching training or university teaching.

We do not expect readers to read the manual from front to back. It can be used more as a reference work. We have taken great care to keep the articles short and readable. Those who wish to delve deeper into the individual themes and knowledge will find further literature in the bibliographies at the end of each contribution.

Given the large number of contributions, it makes no sense to acknowledge them individually in this preface. In order to be able to take a look at the field of knowledge at a glance, we list them here in keywords. However, the variety of topics is much greater than this, because numerous other constructs, concepts, and theories are discussed in each of the individual contributions. They are listed as keywords before each contribution.

The themes in brief

1. *General themes, coaching process, research, and profession:* definitions and concepts—science and practice—pseudoscience and charlatanry—gender and micropolitics—coaching relationship—diagnostics—success factors in the coaching process—interactions in the coaching process—ethics—professionalization—forms of contracts—quality of service—state of coaching research—team coaching research—health coaching research—supervision for coaches—system theories—behavior modification—brain-focused coaching—understanding and comprehension—e-coaching—future of AI in coaching—coaching and sustainability.
2. *Individual characteristics and changes:* Insights through coaching—defense mechanisms—mindfulness—affects and action regulation—burnout—embodiment—emotional intelligence—emotion regulation—feedback—motivational interviewing—gender theory—health—decision making—complex problem solving—culturality—career—crises—learning—mentalization—motivation and goal commitment—motivation, will, and implementation—side effects—personality development—mental disorders—resilience—self-development—self-reflection—meaning—language and meaning—stress and stress management—transformative learning—transference and countertransference—growth and security orientation—perception and judgment—values—goals
3. *Leadership and teams:* Failure in groups—leadership coaching—leadership theories—interaction dynamics in groups—team coaching—problems of teamwork—implicit leadership theories—interaction—communication—conflict management—bullying—roles—top management

4. *Organization and society:* change processes—dynamics in family businesses—power and micropolitics—organizational metaphors—organizational context—organizational culture—coaching and sustainability

No manual can be complete. Right up until the last minute, we included additional contributions. Anyone who misses concepts can let us know and we can decide whether to include them as an online contribution first. Our goal is to keep adding to and updating the handbook. For future additions, we would especially appreciate specific feedback on the individual chapters.

The two articles "Coaching definitions and concepts" and "(How) can coaching practitioners learn from science?" provide an introduction and overview to the different concepts and scientific views found in coaching. They are therefore placed at the beginning of the handbook. Overall, we have included different disciplines (psychology, education, business administration, sociology, philosophy, neuroscience, linguistics, and communication sciences) with a very wide range of scientific directions as well as qualitative and quantitative research methods, both in the overarching contributions and within the range of topics. However, we have not included concepts for which there is no scientific research or which would be classified as "pseudoscientific" because they merely give themselves the appearance of being scientific but on closer examination use scientific terms, findings, and theories in a misleading way and have not been subjected to supportive research.

Our handbook is aimed first and foremost at coaches and those who want to become coaches, at human resource developers who implement and organize coaching in their organizations, or at other clients of coaches. Coaching clients who want to know more about the basics of coaching would be a further interesting group of readers. Clients and coaches often emphasize the importance of working together as equals. As in our initial idea for this handbook, we would also like to see its use in coaching trainings.

The exchange with the authors and among us five editors was very intensive and discursive. We all took a lot of time for it, but we are convinced that it has brought us to new levels of understanding. We would like to thank the authors for this.

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Contents

Coaching Definitions and Concepts

Siegfried Greif, Heidi Möller, Wolfgang Scholl, Jonathan Passmore, and Felix Müller

Influence Through Coaching Definitions and Concepts

What is Coaching? Almost every coach knows the answer to this question. However, a comprehensive answer requires a description of coaching which differentiates it from other interventions. Defining coaching, and describing its unique characteristics, is a cornerstone of the profession (Passmore & Yi-Ling, 2019). With a definition in place, the coach can start to construct their claims that coaching is indeed a profession (Fietze, 2015).

Some see coaching as a form of person-oriented counselling, others as help for self-help rather than counselling. Raddatz (2006) sees coaching entirely as counselling without advice on the grounds that advice would not work. Differences of opinion in definitions are not merely disputes over words. These differences are related to different underpinning concepts, dispute over what counts as evidence and the future direction of development. Definitions are used to define areas of

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professional influence and those who assert them can hold a privileged position, influencing both professional practice and training (Beck et al., 1980).

For organizations, clients, and coaches, it is of fundamental importance to explore these different coaching definitions and concepts. However, in this short chapter, it is not possible to provide a complete review of all definitions, but we hope to provide a useful summary.

Coaching Definitions and Their References to Coaching Concepts

From today's relativist perspective definitions are not right or wrong (Gabriel, 2004). According to classical definition theory, a coaching definition should name the central characteristics that must be present in order for an interaction to be described as coaching and at the same time indicate characteristics that distinguish coaching from other interactions. Wahren defines coaching as "individual counselling of individuals or groups in professional and/or psychological-sociodynamic questions or problems related to the world of work by the coach" (1997, p. 9).

This early definition sees coaching as an activity (counselling) limited in scope, that of business. However, the development of coaching has seen the definition extended beyond work (Schmidt-Lellek & Buer, 2011). According to Rauen, coaching is a "person-centered counselling and support process that can include professional and private content and is limited in time" (2001, p. 64). Instead of the relatively unspecific definition offered by Wahren, other writers have tried to identify the unique features of coaching.

Passmore and Fillery-Travis (2011) have drawn on Gabriel's thinking to offer a definition which ascribed characters, processes, and outcomes to the activity of coaching: "Coaching is a Socratic based, future focused, dialogue, between a facilitator (coach) and a participant (client), the purpose is to stimulate the self-awareness and personal responsibility of the participant."

In contrast Kilburg, noted the organization's interests in coaching and offered an organizational definition: *"Executive coaching is defined as a helping relationship formed between a client who has managerial authority and responsibility in an organization and a consultant who uses a wide variety of behavioral techniques and methods to help the client achieve a mutually identified set of goals to improve his or her professional performance and personal satisfaction and, consequently, to improve the effectiveness of the client's organization within a formally defined coaching agreement"* (Kilburg, 1996).

Difficult Delimitation

The core characteristics listed in these definitions are not precisely defined. When writers suggest that coaching is "person-centered," does this mean that the coach will address the client's wishes as the sole focus of their work? What about the interests of the organizations that pay for the coaching? How are these interests balanced? Even if this characteristic is narrowly defined, it remains to be asked whether it is sufficient to distinguish it from other forms of 1-1 interventions, such as vocational counselling, mentoring, or personal development.

Are precise descriptions of the characteristics of coaching and differentiation from other interventions important or only necessary for scientific definitions? Coaching associations have not paid attention to quality criteria for definitions but like to use formulations that point to important characteristics, but which are short and snappy. One example is the definition of the world's largest international coaching association, the International Coaching Federation (ICF): "Coaching is partnering with clients in a thought-provoking and creative process that inspires them to maximize their personal and professional potential" (ICF, 2015). This definition is effective in advertising coaching and may best be regarded as an persuasive definition (Gabriel, 2004). However, it is limited in helping the reader differentiate between coaching and learning, or helping the reader understand the unique characteristics of coaching.

Coaching and Counselling

In some definitions, explanations are added in order to highlight the special features of coaching. In these explanations, references to the underlying coaching concepts can sometimes be identified. Thus, Rauen (2001, p. 63 f.) explains that "coaching does not involve 'advice' but focuses on 'self-help' and 'self-responsibility'". He notes it also excludes the treatment of mental disorders.

The formula "self-help" is used by many coaches and suggests that coaching aims to activate the existing resources of the clients. Some coaches see this as an important differentiation from counselling. However, there are definitions of counselling that see counselling as an aid to self-help. According to Häcker and Stapf counselling is a "problem-solving process designed by the counsellor according to methodical aspects, through which the efforts of the person seeking advice are supported and his competences are improved in order to cope with the task at hand independently" (Häcker & Stapf, 2009, p. 122). Constructivist counselling concepts, such as the systemic concept of Handler's integrated counselling (2007), also explicitly distinguish them from traditional specialist counselling. Whether coaching can be regarded as counselling, therefore, depends on what is understood by the term counselling. Deplazes et al. (2016) used micro-process analyses of expert videos to show that many coaches, contrary to their claims,

among other things, asked closed questions and combine instructive elements with a facilitative process. Passmore (2007) found that experienced coaches while espousing a specific model often used a diverse combination of models in their practice.

Coaching to Promote Solution and Result-Oriented Self-Reflection

Within the framework of coaching, which is protected by confidentiality, the client can openly reflect on their objectives, personal motives, and goals, but also on their fears, difficulties, and conflicts with others as well as on their individual situation and their possibilities, in a similar way to psychotherapy (see chapter: Self-Reflection in Coaching). The increasing complexity and uncertainties of post-traditional society require the individual to be more reflexive (Giddens, 1991). Against this background, Reinhard Stelter sees the function of coaching as opening a reflexive space to develop new possibilities for action (2013, p. 412). In contrast to other methods, an important key feature of coaching can therefore be seen as a "systematic and intensive promotion of result-oriented problem- and self-reflection" (Greif, 2008, p. 59). However, it may be argued that coaching shares this with psychotherapy. However, in contrast to psychotherapy, reflections in coaching focus more on the social and organizational context (see chapter: Mental Disorders in Coaching).

Problem- and self-reflections can slide into endless rumination. One of the approaches used by coaches to overcome this is to focus on solutions and results. This does not mean that they must lead to a definable goal, but also to a focus on new insights, actions, decisions, or resolutions.

Greif's definition includes further features:

"Coaching is an intensive and systematic promotion of result-oriented problem- and self-reflection as well as counselling of individuals or groups to improve the achievement of self-congruent goals or to conscious self-change and self-development. The counselling and psychotherapy of mental disorders are excluded". (Greif, 2008, p. 59). Thus, goals are regarded as self-congruent if they agree with the clients' mental representation of their ideal self-concept.

Coaching Concepts

In her book on the history of coaching, Leni Wildflower (2013) describes the many social and conceptual influences on the development of coaching since its beginnings in the 1960s and 1970s. Her social backgrounds include the Civil Rights and Self-Help Movement in the USA, the Human Potential Movement, and above all Humanistic Psychology. Wildflower sees the Esalen Institute, founded in 1962 in Big Sur, California (USA), as an innovative center for intellectual and spiritual

discussions and creative ideas. The names of the thought leaders who were invited to Esalen at the time and who conducted workshops or training sessions read like a complete Who's Who of the time. Many of their ideas are still the basis of coaching concepts today. Just to name a few: Abraham Maslow with his humanistic motivation theory and utopia of self-fulfillment in society, Will Schutz and group-dynamic encounter groups, Carl Rogers with his justification of humanistic psychology and client-centered therapy and counselling, Fritz Perls with his first ideas on Gestalt therapy, the family psychotherapist Virginia Satir, Timothy Leary with his plea for free access to psychedelic drugs, the anthropologist Gregory Bateson with his communication theory, the physicist Fritjov Capra with his holistic-systemic approach and bridging to Taoism and Eastern mysticism, Alexander Lowen with his bioenergetics, the Viennese neurologist and psychiatrist Viktor Frankl and existentially oriented psychotherapy as a search for the meaning of life, Albert Ellis with a cognitive turn in behavioral therapy and the analysis of irrational beliefs, the psychiatrist Eric Berne and his Transactional Analysis (TA), the computer scientist Richard Bandler and the linguist John Grinder, who both, influenced by workshops in Esalen and by therapists like Satir, developed together the concept of Neurolinguistic Programming (NLP) (see chapter: Pseudoscience and Charlatanry in Coaching) or the racing driver Sir John Whitmore, who in his second career and his studies of humanistic psychologists like Maslow and Rogers developed his GROW concept as a process model of coaching. In addition to scientists, spiritual teachers such as Alan Watts (Zen Buddhism as a new form of psychoanalysis) were also involved in Esalen.

Psychoanalytical or Psychodynamic Concepts

According to Wildflower (2013), many of today's coaching concepts have their roots in psychoanalytic therapeutic directions, which are often referred to as psychodynamic in more recent overarching approaches. Psychodynamic coaching applies an understanding of organizations and leadership as well as methods from psychoanalytic therapy to the coaching process (see Giernalczyk & Lohmer, 2012). In addition to the consciously perceived processes, unconscious processes such as defense mechanisms (see chapter: Defense Mechanisms), fears and resistances are analyzed that shape the behavior of the client or the entire organization and stand in the way of a realistic completion of tasks (see Haubl, 2008; West-Leuer & Sies, 2003). In addition to focusing on functional structures such as tasks, responsibilities, and roles as well as personality and leadership styles, unconscious conflict patterns and dominant character characteristics of the client are also included. The psychodynamic approach, therefore, sees the client in a force field that is determined by his personality on the one hand and the team and organizational dynamics of his/her organization on the other—the mediating instance is the concept of the roles he/she assumes. The psychodynamic approach assumes that the development orientation of people is supported within the framework of a coaching process. Through increasing

awareness of personal and organizational patterns and personal development wishes, growth, self-control, and self-efficacy as well as the possibilities of positive leadership are promoted.

The GROW Model and Goal-Oriented Coaching

Sir John Whitmore propagates an approach which he described as "Coaching for Performance" (Whitmore, 1992). At the heart of this approach was The GROW model. The model stands as an acronym for the initial letters of the words: Goal setting, Reality review (feasibility in the current situation), Options (choices and alternative strategies), and Way forward (what needs to be done, when, by whom, and with the will to do it. In order to motivate clients to define goals, Whitmore drew on SMART criteria. SMART is an acronym for Specific, Measurable, Accepted, Realistic, and Scheduled. Whitmore formulated his model in a way that caught popular attention while also underpinning the approach with psychological theories (Maslow's Motivation Theory, Goal setting theory, Objective Theories, and Emotional Intelligence) as well as his practical experience of coaching executives.

Anthony Grant has developed goal-oriented coaching based on cognitive theories and research on self-regulation (see chapter: Goals in Coaching). The approach can be considered a prototype of a scientifically based, or evidence-based concept (Stober & Grant, 2006), because the theoretical models and the effectiveness of coaching have been tested using scientific methods, such as RCT's (randomized control groups).

Different Systemic Coaching Concepts

A growing number of coaching approaches describe their approach as systemic. According to a review of coaching approaches, systemic approaches seem most popular in Germany with 55%. This compared with only 2% in the United Kingdom and none in North America (Greif, 2014).

What is understood by the term "systemic" varies between writers (see chapter: System Theories in Coaching). Many writers do not provide a definition. Others refer to Luhmann's operative constructivist theory of social systems (1984). König and Volmer (2002) orientate themselves in their cross-directional, moderately constructivist systemic coaching on further developments of Bateson's personal system theory. Oriented to Bateson, they assume that the behavior of social systems results from the interaction of the acting persons and their subjective interpretations, social rules, behavioral patterns and feedback loops, and the system environment. Furthermore, there are coaching concepts in which, for example, the consideration of interactions in the family or groups is regarded as systemic, based on Satir or other

concepts of family therapy and Gestalt theory (see chapter: System Theories in Coaching).

Neurolinguistic Programming

In the 1970s, Richard Bandler and John Grinder analyzed the linguistic interventions of successful psychotherapies; Virginia Satir, Fritz Perls, and Milton Erickson in an attempt to combine these methods on the basis of a constructivist communication model (Bandler & Grinder, 1975). Basic assumptions were that people can be classified as different types of learners according to their preferred sensory channels and that certain nonverbal reactions of individuals provide information about internal processes (e.g., looking up to the left means that the person remembers something visually). However, the vast majority of available studies on the assumptions and effects of NLP provide no consistent confirmation (Sharpley, 1987; Witkowski, 2010; Passmore & Rowson, 2019) and is considered a pseudoscience by some authors (see chapter: Pseudoscience and Charlatanry in Coaching). Notwithstanding this evidence, according to wider European research (Passmore et al., 2017) NLP remains a widely taught and used coaching approach.

Cognitive Behavioral Coaching Concepts

In contrast to classical behavior therapy, the focus of cognitive-behavioral concepts is on behavioral change, as well as changes to the cognitions and emotions involved. According to Ellis' ABC(DE) model (1993), which is also used in coaching, people often experience undesirable but activating events (A). About these events they develop rational, but also irrational beliefs (B). These beliefs lead to emotional, behavioral, and cognitive consequences (C), with the irrational beliefs leading to maladaptive or unhealthy consequences. Therefore, the clients are supported to dispute (D) and change of the irrational beliefs and encouraged to develop more efficient (E) rational beliefs and behavior.

In addition to Ellis, there are various alternative cognitive-behavioral coaching concepts. They draw on a wealth or evidence (see chapter: Behavior Modification in Coaching). Cognitive-behavioral coaching has emerged as one of the most popular and widely used methods in coaching practice, for example, in Europe (Passmore et al., 2017). Practitioners have added to the literature through developing coach-specific models (Palmer et al., 2008).

Solution-Focused Coaching

According to de Shazer (De Shazer & Dolan, 2012), the aim of this approach is for the practitioner to help the clients to focus on the future positive situation after their goal is accomplished and to develop a solution using their experience knowledge and strengths. If a coach strictly follows the concept of solution-focused theory the client avoids problem analysis and instead invests their energy in identifying solutions. One way of encouraging this shift in focus is the Miracle question:

"Imagine, in the middle of the night, a miracle happens and the problem that prompted you to talk to me today has been solved. (. . .) So, when you wake up tomorrow morning, what might be the small change, change that will make you say to yourself, 'Wow. Something must have happened—the problem is gone!" (simplified according to De Shazer & Dolan, 2012).

Scientific studies prove the effectiveness of the method as a brief approach (De Shazer & Dolan, 2012). These methods, like cognitive behavioral coaching, have also been widely transferred to coaching (Passmore et al., 2017).

Positive Psychological Coaching

Similar to solution-focused counselling, positive psychology assumes that interventions have a more positive effect if they are strengths-focused and directly aimed at positive consequences. Positive psychology sees itself as a comprehensive psychology, which can be applied to all areas of practice, and again has been adapted and developed as a coaching approach (Kauffman et al., 2010; Green & Palmer, 2019).

Result-Oriented Coaching

The result-oriented coaching approach (Greif, 2008) integrates empirically verified findings from application-oriented research, e.g., on self-concept theory as the basis for result-oriented self-reflection (see chapter: Self-Reflection in Coaching). It not only takes into account goal clarifications according to the SMART criteria, but also encourages the clients to reflect on goals, their identity and meaning of life. In contrast to positive psychological coaching, clients are given space to reflect on negative experiences and problems, but this reflection is combined with an activation of their positive resources. The result-oriented coaching was deliberately not formulated as a closed theory, but as a theoretical framework open to change and expansion.

Narrative Coaching

The basic assumption of Narrative Therapy, developed by White and Epston (1990), is that individuals' identity is formed by the stories individuals tell about themselves and their life. Stories and experiences of failure, which are told again and again with strong emotional participation, are particularly important. Drake and Stelter (2014) conceive narrative coaching as a values free, philosophical conversation (see chapter: Meaning as a Topic in Coaching). The reflexive conversations help clients to become aware of their own stories, to recognize that the meaning and their identity are constructed, to understand how they influence their identity and through this their behavior.

Clarifying and Discussing Differences and Similarities

The coaching definitions and concepts presented in this chapter differ widely. There appears little consensus between coaches about coaching concepts and what they understand by coaching. According to our observations, however, differences and issues are not even discussed openly at conferences or in research papers, but informally within groups who share similar orientations. However, coaching can only constitute itself as an overarching profession that is open to different directions, concepts, and methods if differences and similarities, as well as the self-image of the profession, are discussed and clarified together. Differences and conflicts within the profession can enrich coaching and stimulate interesting exploration of concepts. The prerequisite is that they are informed in terms of evidence and carried out cooperatively.

In conclusion, coaching still lacks a dedicated center like Esalen offered in the 1960s and 1970s. We believe what is needed is more space at conferences, in coaching journals and in cross-directional publications, to encourage and facilitate these discussions to develop a shared and deepened understanding across different coaching concepts. Our aim is to use this publication as a mechanism to draw together different institutions that offer both coach training and research, like the Coaching Psychology at the University of Sydney, the Institute of Coaching at the Harvard Medical School, Henley Business School, Case Western, and the Theory and Methodology of Counselling unit at the University of Kassel or the Division Social Psychology at the University of Salzburg.

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How Can Coaching Practitioners Learn from Science?

Wolfgang Scholl, Siegfried Greif, and Heidi Möller

Introduction

This handbook aims to convey scientific concepts and theories that can be useful for coaches in training and practice. Often, practitioners are interested to explore scientific findings and to consider how this research can inform their work.

However, many practitioners are also very skeptical about the benefits of scientific findings for practice. More precisely, according to our observations, the following quite different attitudes towards scientific results can be found:

(1) Enthusiastic acceptance of scientific findings (e.g., from current brain research), even if it remains unclear to what extent these findings change practical action.
(2) Great general skepticism about the validity of scientific findings. If fellow scientists themselves criticize research results, which findings are valid?
(3) General rejection of applied science because it has an unjustified claim to truth. Some practitioners say accordingly, they are not interested in whether their knowledge is "true" or "false," but only pragmatically, "whether it works."
(4) Staying out of the difficult dispute within science; this seems to be better because otherwise everything will be further complicated.
(5) Resignation about the sheer volume of knowledge. Even full-time scientists cannot keep up to date beyond their small area of research; so, why should a

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practitioner try to come to grips with the many possibly relevant scientific results beneath the demanding role of working with clients?

In this chapter, these different points will be analyzed in more detail and worked through with the aim of creating more clarity and showing possibilities for building bridges between science and practice. Since general skepticism towards science (2) and the dispute within science (3) precede the other points, we begin with a description of the relevant views on science that can be found with reference to their application in coaching. Subsequently, the relationship between science and practice is systematically presented with regard to the respective possibilities in order to clarify the problem points (1) and (4).

For point (5), the immense abundance and topicality of scientific knowledge, it is necessary to clearly compile the current scientific knowledge that applies to coaching. This is precisely the aim of our handbook. Numerous specialists and practitioners present coaching-relevant findings from their fields of work in a compact and understandable way and provide examples of their application. The handbook thus provides a model for building bridges between science and practice.

Science Views and Coaching Directions

Philosophy of science is a vast field within philosophy, basically much too large for a short chapter. In the following, therefore, only the scientific views that are frequently represented in the field of coaching, namely (1) the empirical–analytical and (2) the systemic–constructivist are addressed. The former are mainly to be found in psychology and other social sciences, the latter especially in sociology and pedagogy, and often also among coaching practitioners.

Empirical–Analytical Science Views

Scientists and inquisitive children both ask "why" questions to find out the causes of what is happening around them. More recent analytical science views analyze how such "why" questions can be answered by scientific explanations. Explanatory attempts can be motivated by unexpected events, explorative studies, critical examination of existing explanations, or new derivations from proven theories. With increasing scientific progress, more comprehensive general theories are formulated to integrate individual explanations, from which then further hypotheses can be derived and tested. Such explanations can be formulated as verbal assumptions or hypotheses or as mathematical models and computer simulations. These hypotheses or models can be tested in a variety of ways, from well-designed case studies or document analyses, to laboratory or field experiments, large field surveys, or secondary analyses of existing data.

It would be a naive view of science if one hoped to be able to find out what is clearly "true" or "false" or to fathom the "truth" through many studies. Since Popper's criticism of the positivism of the Viennese School (1934/2005), most science theorists have acknowledged that empirical research can never prove a theory or assumption as "true" or "right." Truth is not a possible result of research, but a regulative idea in the sense of a general striving for better predictions and a rejection of disconfirmed results, of "fake knowledge," and fraud. Scientists are committed to this guiding idea, even if they cannot see how far they have approached "truth" with a more valid explanation or research study. The "getting closer" only applies in comparison with other explanations, which do less well explain what is observed; for instance, different degrees of goal achievement with different coaching methods. According to this view of science, one must always face critical empirical tests as to whether the hypotheses (or models) derived from the theory have proved themselves provisionally in a study, in comparison with alternative hypotheses. Even if it is possible to predict the results of investigations with repeated critical tests and thereby to explain a high percentage of the variance found, then the theory has provisionally proved its worth and can become the starting point for investigations in other contexts as well as for deeper or more comprehensive explanations. Scientific progress is built up on empirical tests with which assumptions can be replaced by modified or new assumptions that are more accurate and/or explain more aspects. The accuracy of the prediction is a first comparison criterion, a second is the explanatory content, i.e. the set and scope of related hypotheses or intended applications derived from a theory.

Scientific explanations of concrete events or research hypotheses should be derived logically from theories. An example is the general goal theory (Locke & Latham, 1990), according to which set goals lead to better results the higher and more specific they are. As a result, more comprehensive and general goals should be broken down into manageable sub-goals and concrete implementation intentions. This has been confirmed in numerous research studies on different goals (Gollwitzer & Sheeran, 2006). During the development of goal theory, a condition was added that the goals must be accepted internally (goal commitment), and that feedback on steps towards goal achievement promotes effectiveness as a moderating condition. As further studies show, goal clarification is, as usual in coaching, an important starting point (see chapter: "Motivation, Volition, and Implementation in Coaching"). Thus, goal theory gained precision and concreteness over time. The scope of the theory was extended in that it has proved itself in externally set, in participatory negotiated, and in self-imposed objectives.

Theories and derived hypotheses intend general validity (applying always and everywhere) and a causal explanation (if–then). Only with intended general validity does it make sense to critically examine them in a wide variety of situations and to specifically improve them according to the test results. If one just describes what is going on in science without this claim, it would only be a kind of historiography or storytelling. Most scientists (and most practitioners as well) assume that their assumptions are generally valid when they refer to past studies or those from other countries (or quote practical experience). The same is also true for everyday

arguments in which the general assumption is often not explicitly mentioned, but is implicit as self-evident by speaker and listener: The call "Boy, put something on, it's freezing cold outside" implies that insufficient clothing causes colds, a common hypothesis already contained in the word "cold" (yet, which is probably wrong, according to Wikipedia). As in any conversation, many such general assumptions are implicitly used in coaching. Their explanation makes them accessible for reflection and critical review. The search for causal explanations of the if-then type is particularly important for the practical use of scientific findings, because it facilitates the targeted search for possible interventions ("if ...") for desired results ("then ...").

In empirical research, things are more complicated. If tests do not lead to confirmation, this does not have to be due to a false theory, but may also be traced back to errors in observation, measurement, or other investigation conditions (Gawronski, 2000); they, too, therefore require new critical reviews and improvements. An empirical non-confirmation can also be due to overlapping and opposing influences which could not be neutralized either by randomization in an experiment or by a large sample in a field study. For instance, smokers usually find it very difficult to give up smoking even though they want to stay healthy for a long time and have set themselves the goal of doing so. Often the achievement of the goal is prevented by conflicting habits, conformity in the circle of friends, or the strength of other immediate needs. In the vast majority of cases, it is necessary to combine several relevant hypotheses into more complex models and to incorporate possible conditional effects for certain applications. For an example of a more complex approach see the already cited chapter: "Motivation, Volition, and Implementation in Coaching.")

Since human behavior takes place in a very complex texture of effects, it is more difficult to check the theories and their investigation conditions than in the natural sciences. First, theoretical concepts or constructs must be operationalized with precise empirical descriptions of the facts in question. Here the development of measurement concepts plays a central role, possibly with the aid of technical instruments. It should be noted that definitions and their operationalization are theory-dependent in two ways, which will be explained using the example of emotion research: First, the constructs must fit the respective theory. In emotion research, for example, two approaches struggle with each other and authors even differ within each approach: Are there a small number of basic emotions that can be distinguished in facial expressions by biologically predetermined muscle contractions or even in neuronal patterns? (Ekman & Oster, 1979; Panksepp, 1998). Or is there a broad spectrum of scalable emotional qualities that can be classified into three dimensions by self- and other-assessment? (Fontaine et al., 2007; Plutchik, 1991). Secondly, the measurement process itself is based on theoretical assumptions, e.g. on the technical equipment for neural measurement or the connections between muscle contractions in the face and experienced feelings, which have to be empirically tested themselves. Finally, the entire examination must be designed in such a way that distorting influences of any kind can be avoided or clearly identified for the interpretation of the results. What could be distorting influences, however, again depends on the state of theoretical and practical knowledge (cf. the smoking example

above). The development and refinement of the methodology of the diverse sciences is therefore of central importance.

A final point: Since humans are exposed to many influences simultaneously and process them according to different patterns, not least according to their own subjective assumptions, theories of human behavior can only explain parts of the variance. This makes it all the more important to concentrate on key concepts that have the strongest effects; this is what we aim with the chapters of this handbook.

Constructivist Critique of the Empirical–Analytical Paradigm

There are many varieties of constructivism, some of which criticize the empirical–analytical paradigm. The three most important are presented first, followed by a version of constructivism compatible with the empirical–analytical paradigm.

Radical Constructivism

Ernst von Glasersfeld is considered to be one of the main representatives of radical constructivism and has dealt specifically with the empirical–analytical conception of science. He attacks it as an empirical science oriented towards the truth criterion and propagates a "radical restructuring of the concepts of knowledge, truth, communication and understanding" so fundamental that "it cannot be reconciled with any traditional epistemology" (Glasersfeld, 1998, p. 50). Theories and assumptions are always based on individual subjective constructions of reality of one's own human brain. He relies on the genetic knowledge and epistemology of the biologist and developmental psychologist Jean Piaget (1973). As a radical constructivist, he denies the possibility of finding out what is "true" or what depicts "reality" correctly and to differentiate between less well and better explanations. He is convinced "truth" cannot be verified under any circumstances (Glasersfeld, 1998, p. 327). Accordingly, a following practitioner concludes: "Nothing is really real, but everyone pretends that reality exists" (Raddatz, 2006, p. 32). There are probably several coaches who regard this statement as true.

Von Glasersfeld, however, is over the top. As described above, neither Popper nor other representatives of the empirical–analytical science view claim that science determines what is "true," but see even well-confirmed theories only as preliminary findings (see above). Scientific practice largely corresponds to this through constant questioning, examination, expansion, and improvement of the respective findings. This is possible because scientists discuss with and against each other, facilitating understanding and examination by explaining their approaches precisely. Von Glasersfeld (2003) doubts the possibility of sufficient understanding, but one does not have to exactly reproduce the activated brain associations of another person in order to understand their respective statements and problems sufficiently; this applies to practical problems and even more to scientifically standardized ones.

Conversations leading to mutual understanding are a core element of coaching (see chapter: "Understanding in Coaching: An Intersubjective Process"). It is therefore astonishing that some coaches and consultants refer to radical constructivism, because their experience also says coaching helps when targeted methods of understanding are applied, and this justifies their professional existence.

In addition, von Glasersfeld himself uses scientific findings for his argument on the structure of the brain or draws on Piaget's theory. This however, leads to a self-contradiction, because in his opinion such findings have no validity beyond the respective author. He acknowledges scientific advances, but does not interpret them as advances in knowledge, but sees them as purely instrumental in the sense that something works. For this idea, he uses the concept of viability, something is "passable" or "not passable." A more precise evaluation does not seem possible to him, whereas in scientific research it is important to arrive step by step at "better" explanations.

After all, coaches can pragmatically conclude they can learn from well-tested empirical–analytical theories and results, regardless of whether these are called "provisionally proved" in the empirical–analytical sense or as "viable" from a more liberal constructivist point of view.

Social Constructivism

In social constructivism (Gergen, 1994) and partly in symbolic interactionism (Blumer, 1969), the possibility of generally valid scientific statements on human behavior is denied. The main argument is that empirical results have often proved not to be universally valid, but culture-dependent, and even important theoretical concepts are understood differently depending on the societal context. However, possibilities of understanding are not fundamentally disputed and empirical studies, which presuppose understanding in interviews and surveys, are considered meaningful. According to Gergen, empirical research has a different purpose: it is intended to promote critical reflection in the respective society in which the investigation took place, i.e. it deepens social discussion and reflection.

This view overlooks the fact that, due to such culture-dependent findings, there has long since been more and more comparative cultural research. This determines whether certain measurement concepts are invariant and also measure the same in other cultures or whether they have to be adapted (Chen, 2008; Vandenberg & Lance, 2000) and whether there are culturally invariant findings or whether variables, depicting cultural differences, must be included as an additional moderator in the explanation of differing results. A good example for the research on cultural differences is the intensive work on individual and group-related self-concepts (independent and interdependent self, cf. Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Singelis, 1994), on whose cultural dependence Gergen based his argument.

Even more important for coaching in science and practice, however, is the evidence of culturally invariant research results in the field of human communication. Although there are many very different languages, dialects, and word uses, the

emotional content of the words, i.e. their actual meaning, can be mapped on the same three dimensions of "evaluation," "potency," and "activity" in all languages studied so far (Osgood et al., 1975). The same applies to many aspects of non-verbal communication and to the feelings expressed through these two types of communication (see chapter: "Communication as a Method and as a Topic in Coaching"). There is obviously a universal biological–physiological basis of human communication and intercultural understanding (Scholl, 2013) on which culture sensitive research builds.

Systemic Constructivism

Especially in Germany, coaching trainers and coaches often explicitly describe their approaches as "systemic" (see the discussion in Greif, 2014, p. 17 f.). In the English speaking world, the term has also been growing in popularity and use since 2012. What is meant by this, however, is very different and it is often just a catchword. Some representatives fall back on radical constructivism and then additionally rely on Maturana and Varela (1992) as well as Luhmann (2018), who both do not see themselves as radical constructivists. Both claim, at least implicitly, general validity for their core statements. To what extent their concepts have proved themselves in scientific criticism and are useful for the design of a coaching concept are questions not covered here (see chapter: "System Theories as a Basis for Coaching"; see also Kriz, 2016).

System theories are meta-theories that postulate certain general characteristics, such as "living systems are basically open systems." This also applies when some process aspects are operationally closed, such as the discharge patterns in the brain. Evolution has created certain sense organs for this purpose, which accomplish some bridging from outside to inside. In contrast to radical constructivism, their interpretation is not completely arbitrary as basic perception research has shown, e.g. for color perception or visual cliffs. In order to apply systems theory in a certain context, additional object-specific knowledge and theories are required, and these look quite different for different topics, e.g. for the world development prognosis by the Club of Rome (Randers, 2012) or for mobility behavior in metropolitan areas (Vester, 2007) or for behavior in and by organizations (Senge, 1990; Gharajedaghi, 2011). Since practitioners with experience and intuition also anticipate such system variables and connections and align their actions accordingly, scientists and practitioners can learn considerably from each other. It should be noted again that system theories are not science theories, but meta-theories about the nature of reality that must be designed object-specifically with empirical assumptions in order to be fruitful for science and practice.

Constructivism in Philosophy of Science and Practice

In the discussion on constructivism the following should be distinguished: at the object level, it is quite clear that not only the objects, rules, and institutions made by humans are social constructions, but also the concepts and assumptions with which these processes and products are described, explained, and planned. This is usually undisputed, because even a superficial look at different cultures, historical products, and social debates confirms this (well elaborated already by Berger & Luckmann, 1966).

On the meta-level, every relevant science is constructivist in the sense that scientists also build their hypotheses and theories from cultural or scientific assumptions or other subjective ideas. The progress of knowledge, however, does not primarily result from individual insights, but from social communication and criticism and the associated social learning. This already applies to learning among practitioners, e.g. in professional associations, but especially to scientific exchange and corresponding studies, because all arguments, methods, and results in science are oriented towards complete verifiability. Thus arguments, hypotheses, and theories are becoming detached from the individual authors and gain independent character, because everyone with the necessary basic knowledge has access to them and can further examine, process, and change them in a similar way as material objects (Popper, 1968). Von Glasersfeld overlooks this because he is too fixated on individual constructions and doubts sufficient communication. Yet, the general theory of relativity was designed by Einstein, but it is now common knowledge in physics and has been tested and (!) confirmed many times for several derived hypotheses by different authors. Also the goal theory of Locke and Latham (1990) or the theory of social comparison processes of Festinger (1954) have been tested and confirmed many times and can be seen as examples for general psychological knowledge. On the other hand, theories such as Skinner's behaviorism have long been criticized as insufficient and have been supplemented by cognitive and emotional components in terms of method and content. Accordingly, this has been reflected in cognitive behavior therapy and cognitive coaching approaches. Several practice approaches also include the concepts of transference and countertransference from psychoanalysis, refined by social cognition (Chen & Andersen, 1999), and are further developed and made fruitful for practice (see chapter: "Transference and Countertransference and Their Significance for Coaching"). Clearly, scientific progress delivers insights beyond individual constructions and even collective paradigms.

It is a special feature of many well-confirmed theories and appropriate test methods that they include areas of knowledge which are not accessible to human sensory perception. This applies in physics, for example, to Einstein's space-time continuum, which goes beyond the human imagination, which is evolutionarily adapted to our world or ecological niche, or the ultrasound, which we do not hear or even see, but which is used, for example, to examine babies in the womb. Also, research into leadership styles such as Consideration and Initiating Structure goes far

beyond our own experience by analyzing in a meta-analysis more than 150 samples and more than 20,000 participants (Judge et al., 2004). Finally, the exploration of unconscious processes provides imperceptible results, such as in priming (Schröder & Thagard, 2013), where behavior is altered by seemingly irrelevant words and their unconscious processing (what illustrates how carefully coaches should choose their words).

These considerations suggest the following:

1. Scientific findings are possible that go beyond subjective experience and can nevertheless be confirmed and improved.
2. Scientific findings do not remain subjective constructions, even if they have been created in this way. They are as strictly tested as possible, and can gain general validity as social scientific constructions. They are practically reflected, for example, in our image of the universe or in nanomaterials or in successful therapies and hopefully also in successful coaching.
3. The question of whether there is a reality outside our subjective and socially objectified scientific constructions can neither be decided logically nor empirically because we have no direct access to reality, as constructivists rightly declare. However, every well-confirmed natural and behavioral scientific theory is a further argument for the assumption of an external reality. The same holds for the relative success of coaching measured in an appropriate way where researchers and coaches assume that there is a (more or less well) describable external reality of the client and the client's interpretation of their situation (see chapter: "Success Factors in the Coaching Process").
4. The development of theories that explain more details and have a greater scope suggests there is gradual scientific "progress" and not only the black-and-white assessment of, "does work/does not work" or "viable/not viable" according to von Glasersfeld. One can regard scientific progress metaphorically as an approach to truth in the sense of a regulatory guiding idea, as long as it remains clear: it is a comparison between better and less well-confirmed statements, not a comparison with the assumed "reality" that is not directly accessible.

How Can Scientific Results Be Used in Practice?

How can the human sciences use their findings to help (coaching) practice? This question is often not asked at all, but it is partly assumed science can directly guide and improve practice by providing well-tested knowledge. However, the fundamental difference between scientific knowledge and practical experience is thereby ignored. Scientists try to test and confirm single law-like theories and hypotheses again and again, i.e. testing if they are always and everywhere valid. For such tests, they prepare and use ideal conditions in order to secure the interpretation of the resulting effects. Practitioners, on the other side, have to master concrete situations with all their complexity here and now, based on respective plausibility checks, and
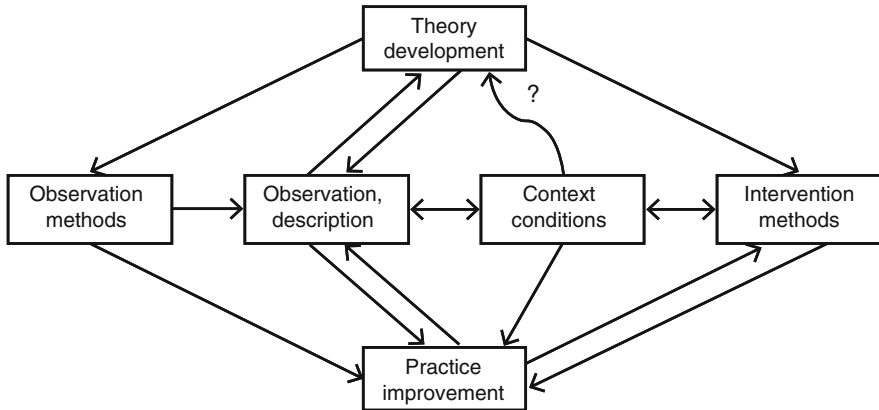
Fig. 1 Relationship between scientific theory development and practical improvement (cf. Scholl, 2014, p. 155)

they try to thereby learn from their own and others' experiences. This fundamental difference shall be explored more thoroughly.

Although fundamental, this difference is not a strict limit, because the assumptions of practitioners are partly pervaded by scientific concepts and assumptions. The same applies vice versa to scientists, especially in the area of human behavior, where they adopt assumptions and concepts from practice and try to specify and test them. Not only practitioners but also scientists, dealing with human behavior, are to some extent shaped in their views of reality by individual, social, and cultural beliefs. So, it is not so difficult to exchange their views on a certain problem if both want to learn from each other. Both sides may refer to specific events, somehow made comparable by categorization, which are observed and described; this is the first area in which exchange and learning from each other are possible (see Fig. 1, center). Scientists, freed from direct pressure to act, can methodically improve the descriptions and specify their assumptions in hypotheses and theories, repeatedly testing them empirically and successively improving them (see the interaction of theory and observation in Fig. 1). The gain in knowledge can be reflected in improved observation methods (see the left half of Fig. 1), from which practitioners can also benefit because they draw attention to important aspects of the describable reality and thus can sharpen their precision of observation. Conversely, they can point out particularly relevant points to scientists. Furthermore, they may develop new intervention methods such as coaching tools, thereby improving their practice. Scientists can then try to evaluate these intervention methods, record the respective phenomena with more precise description methods, and assess their success (right side of Fig. 1). Practitioners and scientists can, of course, simply let themselves be inspired directly by the theories and assumptions of the other side, which also may lead to deeper reflections and gains in knowledge and experience. In this handbook, such general theories on the one side and specific procedures for coaching on the other are represented in the following chapters.

The application of science in practice, however, is more complicated than it appears at first glance. The central and partly insurmountable differences between science and practice lie in the context conditions. In science, only a few important context conditions can be explicitly investigated depending on the central question of a study. Most have to be neutralized as confounding conditions in order to test the central hypotheses more unambiguously. This is done either experimentally by keeping those conditions constant or in field research through large samples with which the peculiarities of different confounding conditions are averaged out as far as possible. In every theory test, however, certain framing conditions have to be taken into account without being tested themselves (Gawronski, 2000; in Fig. 1, this is illustrated by a curved line with a question mark); therefore, many different investigations are required for the same hypothesis, because quite often, deviating results are obtained because of changes in the framing conditions which demand further and more precise tests.

In practice, it is precisely the framing and confounding conditions that must be taken into account in every action and this is especially important in coaching. For the relevant mix of context conditions, there exists no theory or integrated compilation of theories that would allow the derivation of concrete measures with a precise prediction of their consequences. This is not a peculiarity of the sciences of human action, it is the same in the relationship between natural sciences and technology. Scientific theories can only partly be used to deduce how the diverse context conditions could be optimized for a technical problem; the rest is trial and error guided by intuition. Coaches must therefore rely on their experience. Of course, they should also consider theoretically predicted and empirically tested effects anyway, as in technology, because these indicate central causes of effectiveness.

Another aspect important for coaching is the fact that the proportion of explained variance and the replicability of findings are usually much lower in the human compared to the natural sciences. People and social systems do not behave like material objects but rather think about their situation themselves and have their own theories and explanation patterns in their minds adding further complexity (e.g., see chapter: "Implicit Leadership Theories and Their Significance in Coaching," and "Metaphors of Organisation and Their Significance in Coaching"). The turn in science away from behaviorism unto cognitive and emotional theories takes this insight into account. At the current state of research, however, it is impossible to integrate the relevant mental processes of different people and social systems into a comprehensive theory if one wants to derive precise predictions about the consequences of individual actions. The best what practitioners and scientists can do are in-depth conversations with mutual explorations of the existing knowledge, a bit similar to that between coach and coachee.

In addition to general theories, it is advantageous if intervention and design methods such as active listening, circular questions, reframing, role plays, relaxation exercises, etc., as well as their embedding in different coaching approaches are scientifically investigated and evaluated. Such evaluations usually examine combinations of measures that occur in different variations and are applied in different contexts with different understandings. The research does not focus on the individual

parts, but on the combinations, so statements about their probation cannot be compared with a test of general hypotheses. Practitioners can and should learn from both, general theories and specific evaluations, and include them in their considerations and intuitions. Unfortunately, practitioners without the knowledge of good basic and applied research sometimes have the problem that traces of outdated or simplified scientific assumptions have entered their thinking and act as so-called social representations outside of their awareness (Flick, 1998). For example, ideas of leadership are very strongly connected with associations of "superior," "male," and "directive"; when superiors do something, there is an automatic expectation that their doing is better than the same actions of employees (see chapter: "Implicit Leadership Theories and Their Significance in Coaching") while better suited ideas of empowerment are neglected (Pfeffer et al., 1998).

Conclusion

Although coaches cannot directly deduce from scientific knowledge how best to proceed, they can get important direction for sharper observation and reflection for their practice. Conversely, scientists can get advice from coaches on what to look at and which confirmed findings might be only partially valid or even wrong. It follows that the knowledge gathered from experience is necessary for practice and should not be valued less than scientific findings—the same applies vice versa. An intensive exchange between science and practice make both theoretical progress and practical improvements possible (see Fig. 1); this should be at the heart of the coaching profession.

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Affective Change for Action Control and Self-Growth in Coaching

Anna Maria Engel and Julius Kuhl

Coaching Occasions from a PSI Theoretical Perspective

Personality systems interactions (PSI) theory (Kuhl, 2000a; Kuhl et al., 2006; Kuhl et al., 2021) has been developed to fulfill the above conditions as a highly integrative meta-theory based on numerous empirical findings from experimental psychology and neurobiology. PSI theory provides a variety of clues for identifying self-competences that can be strengthened to overcome the problem. Moreover, when a client's personality assessment reveals several impaired self-competences, PSI theory may suggest one of them as a common "leitmotiv" (Kuhl et al., 2006, p. 414) that explains the remaining impairments (e.g., Kuhl et al., 2021). This leitmotiv may guide coaches toward finding appropriate interventions and methods for individualized coaching. This example illustrates how utilizing a systems theory may help simplify the coach-client interaction: Instead of addressing each of the problems arising, it suffices to address one problem only (i.e., the leitmotiv).

Problems in Achieving Goals or Implementing Difficult Intentions

Martin is the managing director of a medium-sized company. He is popular with employees and knows how to motivate them. He was hired primarily because of his

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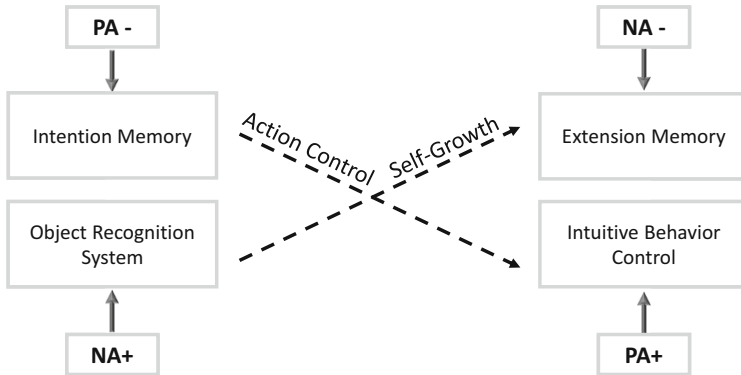
Fig. 1 Affective change in personality systems interactions (PSI) theory

inspiring style, which was highlighted in his reference by his previous employer. However, when sales slump in a crisis year, his initiative diminishes. He forgets appointments and he is overstraining his team, constantly asking for tasks to be completed. As the situation escalates Martin contacts a coach.

Problems in attaining goals are frequently based on difficulties in the implementation of novel or unpleasant behavioral intentions, particularly when new tasks come up that require managerial responsibility. Efficient action, though, demands the implementation of uncomfortable and difficult resolutions (i.e., implementation of intentions) in a way that satisfies the constraints of the situation encountered. The prerequisites for this competence are obvious: Firstly, one should not forget the proper resolution and, secondly, one should also muster the necessary energy to act at the right moment in order not to fall into the procrastination trap.

PSI theory postulates two systems that mediate those two functional prerequisites: Intention memory and intuitive behavior control (see Fig. 1). *Intention memory* is involved in the "maintenance of explicit intentions" (Jostmann & Koole, 2006, p. 1717; Kuhl, 2000a; Kuhl et al., 2021). An intention specifies some behavior that is to be enacted to attain a goal. The implementation of intentions requires an interaction between intention memory and intuitive behavior control. In PSI theory, two opposing forms of interaction are postulated between intention memory and intuitive behavior control. First, as soon as an intention has been formed, the connectivity between intention memory and intuitive behavior control is inhibited to avoid premature action. This case is called *volitional inhibition.* Second, when the right time has come for enactment, the connectivity between intention memory and intuitive behavior control is restored. This case is called *volitional facilitation* (Kazén & Kuhl, 2005).

These two opposing modes of interaction explain the paradoxical assumption that forming an intention initially increases volitional inhibition, i.e., makes it more difficult to translate an intention into action. The reason is not difficult to grasp: Explicit intentions are actually formed when obstacles arise, which prohibit spontaneous enactment. Obstacles are often emotional, for example, when the execution of

an intention seems unpleasant. Moreover, explicit intentions are frequently made when it makes sense to postpone the execution, for example, until a suitable opportunity arises or when it seems advisable to take time to further consider a decision instead of acting prematurely. Thus, the purpose of the inhibition component associated with each formation of intention is to create a time slot for overcoming the respective execution difficulties. On an emotional level, the inhibition of behavioral energy is associated with a damping of positive affect (PA−; see Fig. 1).

The dynamics underlying the implementation of intentions (i.e., action control) helped explain Martin's problem. According to a diagnostic system based on PSI theory (i.e., Evolvement-Oriented Scanning (EOS); e.g., Kaschel & Kuhl, 2004), Martin's enormous initiative was based on his stable positive mood providing an extraordinary amount of behavioral energy. But since he was bound to the positive affect (PA+; see Fig. 1), he was also committed to spontaneous-intuitive action and had difficulties generating difficult or unpleasant intentions that are naturally associated with dampened positive affect. In other words, Martin's inability, to tolerate the somewhat frustrating affective states of lowered positive affect explains his "difficulty with difficulties". He functioned well in his leadership position as long as he could delegate difficult tasks. His problems came about when difficulties arose that could not be mastered by spontaneous action or by passing them to employees. In coaching people like Martin, it is, therefore, necessary to create a space for practicing frustration tolerance and the damping of positive affect associated with difficult intentions.

While Martin had to learn how to tolerate frustration, more thoughtful and less enthusiastic people can easily make difficult resolutions, but must learn to generate positive affect to be able to implement their intentions. Although the inhibition component itself helps them activate their intention memory, it can have the effect that intention memory is so heavily burdened by a multitude of intentions that positive energy for action is continually lowered. This results in stress, which can be characterized by a feeling of tension or muted positive affect (up to listlessness). In such cases, it makes sense to relieve intention memory through prioritization and other time management tools and techniques, and perhaps even give up less important intentions altogether, so that the release from those multiple commitments can finally stop actions being inhibited.

In order to implement uncompleted intentions, volitional facilitation is needed. This means restoring positive affect, which, in turn, reestablishes the connectivity between intention memory and intuitive behavior control. This transition from intention to action is initiated by positive affect generated by others or by oneself (Kuhl, 2000a; Kuhl et al., 2021). Self-regulated generation of positive affect can be supported in coaching by employing some self-motivation training, as described in a later section (for an evaluation of such a training procedure, see Baumann & Kuhl, 2020; Friederichs et al., 2020). In addition to the generation of positive affect, there are other alternative forms of volitional facilitation, such as forming automatic routines (e.g., if-then propositions: Gollwitzer, 1999) or the increase of avoidance motivation through pressure to implement the action plan associated with an intention (e.g., when deadlines are approaching). Since these alternative forms of

volitional facilitation come about without self-involvement (Engel & Kuhl, 2014; Kuhl et al., 2015), they have the disadvantage of being more rigid rendering it more difficult to adapt flexibly and creatively to changing situational conditions. The reasons why flexibility and creativity require the participation of the self are explained in the next section.

Difficulties in Solving Occupational Problems or Learning from Mistakes

Teresa got into trouble as a programmer in a software development department by repeatedly making the same programming errors, even after she had analyzed and recognized the errors. She had difficulty in timely registering situations in which errors could reappear to avoid them.

If the focus in coaching is on difficulties solving professional problems, according to PSI theory this is more a coaching situation in the area of utilizing one's own experience rather than action control. Learning from mistakes and dealing with problem-solving requires a two-stage process characterized by first focusing on negative affect and subsequently coping with it: the first step of any learning from mistakes is to identify the problem or error. For example, some more or less painful experience like an error, a painful event, or a fear-arousing object has to be recognized. Secondly, learning from the problem and eventually finding possible solutions to the problem, requires to connect it with the network of personal experience, which provides possible options for problem-solving action, or for coping with the painful experience associated with it. This is to say that an experiential cycle toward self-growth necessitates the succession of two steps: Firstly, focusing on the problem at hand and, secondly, making contact with the extended network of personal experience (i.e., the self). It goes without saying that difficult problems may require several self-growth cycles.

According to PSI theory, just like action control each experiential cycle toward self-growth requires the cooperation of two partly antagonistic systems: the object recognition system and extension memory (see Fig. 1). The main function of the *object recognition system* is to focus on one detail at a time (i.e., an "object"). This process demands separating the object from its specific context as in figure-ground contrast. According to PSI theory, object recognition is intensified when novel, unexpected, incongruent, or incorrect information is detected (Kuhl et al., 2006, 2021). When dealing with errors and painful events, the advantage of intensifying object recognition is obvious: For example, focusing on the source of danger and disregarding the rest of the situation facilitates and guides avoidance behavior. Hence, the object recognition system is specialized in the recognition of errors, problems, and discrepancies. However, for sustainable error-correction, learning and self-growth, those errors, problems or discrepancies need to make contact with *extension memory*, which represents an extended, largely unconscious network of

personally relevant experiences. Extension memory capitalizes on high-level parallel processing integrating a virtually unlimited number of separate experiences. An essential part of this network—the self—forms the basis for the perception of one's own inner states, goals, needs, abilities, and behavioral options for problem-solving. This is to say that the self heavily capitalizes on autobiographical memory (Baumann & Kuhl, 2003).

Again, similar as in action control, the interaction between the object recognition system and extension memory involves two opposing modes that are characterized by inhibition vs. facilitation (Baumann, 2004): The activation of the object recognition system is associated with negative affect (NA+; see Fig. 1; Engel & Kuhl, 2014). As a matter of course, while an individual is focusing on a source or consequence of negative affect (e.g., an error or some painful or fear-arousing event), he or she does not have access to the panoramic view of extension memory and the self. To put it in the language of PSI theory: the activation of the object recognition system leads to an inhibition of the holistic network of personal experiences (i.e., to self-inhibition). *Self-inhibition* entails impaired access to the self with its memories related to relevant life experiences, possible solutions to a problem, or personal preferences (Baumann & Kuhl, 2003). As soon as negative affect can be downregulated below some critical threshold (NA−; see Fig. 1), self-inhibition turns into facilitated self-access. A process referred to as *self-facilitation* (Baumann, 2004). During this process, the two systems involved (i.e., object recognition system and the self) can exchange information.

There are two conditions that impede learning from errors and self-growth in general: excessive activation of the error focus or its permanent avoidance. Excessive activation of the error focus entails the risk of perseverating rumination (e.g., Baumann & Kuhl, 2003). It is therefore important to shift the focus of attention from the error or painful event to the vast network of personal experience (i.e., the self). This transition is facilitated by bringing the aversive experience into contact with the experiential network of the self. According to PSI theory, the experiential network can only be activated in a relaxed state. We know this effect from everyday life: tension and uncertainty do not expand the scope of attention but narrow the view. In this case, stress management can help to regulate and reduce negative affect. By activating extension memory with its immense experiential knowledge, negative affect can actively be reduced, a process called *self-relaxation*. The contact between an aversive experience and the self promotes perceiving the personal significance of the error or discrepancy and to tackle the current problem with available solution strategies (Kazén & Quirin, 2018). The reduction of negative affect in coaching can be supported not only by stress management (e.g., avoiding stressful situations) but also by working on self-relaxation, which is described in a later section.

Being stuck in the first phase of the self-growth cycle is not the only impediment to learning from errors and other forms of self-growth. Additionally, some people avoid the unpleasant focus on negative experiences and strongly or even excessively adhere to the relaxed mood associated with the panoramic view of the self. Consistently ignoring, embellishing, or repressing aversive events is another case of impaired self-growth, which seems to be the problem in Teresa's case. In this case, learning from mistakes or painful experiences can be promoted by inviting

the client to devote some attention to negative events and to learn how to tolerate exposure to negative affect without resorting to defense mechanisms. Coaches can facilitate this process by helping to create a safe space in which the client can endure the negative affect associated with unpleasant or even painful experiences. In addition, it is often helpful to highlight the learning opportunity provided by focusing on an aversive event and to point to the fact that admitting to one's errors and paying attention to one's own or others' negative feelings is frequently perceived as an indication of personal strength (Engel & Kuhl, 2014).

Through the active reduction of negative affect, the error or some other painful experience can be integrated into extension memory and the self. In other words, the interaction between the object recognition system (focusing on the aversive experience) and the self results in an increase in complexity and maturation of extension memory. Thus, it promotes personality development (i.e., self-growth). A growing self, in turn, eases coping with painful experiences in a sustainable way and to link them with networks that provide meaningfulness and a variety of possible solutions and courses of action. In particular, the integration of errors into the self facilitates recognizing situations that entail the risk of repeating the error. The timely recognition of error risks capitalizes on the largely unconscious operation of extension memory. This feature enables the self to monitor the environment from the background of consciousness for possible error risks (Kuhl et al., 2015).

Self-Regulatory Competences and Their Promotion Through Coaching

From the preceding introduction to PSI theory it becomes clear that it is the shift between systems that is relevant for action control or self-growth, respectively, and, thus, should be supported in coaching. Specifically, the self-directed activation of relevant systems depends on affect regulation: each of the four psychological systems involved is activated by a different affective state (Kuhl et al., 2006; see Fig. 1).

Implementing difficult intentions (action control) requiring interaction between intention memory and intuitive behavior control is facilitated by a change from low positive affect (PA-) to high positive affect (PA+). Learning from mistakes (self growth) requiring an interaction between object recognition system and an extension memory (or "self") is facilitated by a change from high negative affect (NA+) to low negative affect (NA-). One of the core criteria of coaching mentioned by Ives (2008) is that coaching is "[d]esigned to access the inner resourcefulness of the client, and built on her wealth of knowledge, experience and intuition" (Ives, 2008, p. 104). To put it in the terms of PSI theory, the client's self plays a decisive role in coaching as it organizes the personally relevant parts of extension memory and its interactions with other systems (cf., Kuhl et al., 2015). To utilize their inner resourcefulness, clients need self-regulatory competences, which can be trained and developed in coaching.

Generally speaking, self-regulatory competence (or "self-competence") can be defined as the (volitional) ability to modify one's spontaneous emotional or cognitive response style whenever affective change would facilitate the current task (Kaschel & Kuhl, 2004). The initial emotional response an individual typically tends to show in novel situations is called the *primary response*. It is a function of partly congenital and partly acquired personality dispositions. An individual's primary emotional response facilitates his or her primary cognitive response. According to PSI theory, a disposition toward positive affect (e.g., in extraverts) should facilitate intuitive behavior control, whereas low dispositional positive affect (e.g., in introverts) should promote the activation of intention memory. People characterized by high sensitivity to negative emotions (e.g., persons scoring high on anxiety or neuroticism) presumably lean toward the object recognition system with its focus on errors and other aversive experiences. And finally, a disposition toward a relaxed primary response (e. g., low dispositional anxiety) should facilitate the activation of extension memory and the self. In order to activate the psychological systems relevant for action control or self-growth, it is important to be able to switch between contrasting affective states (Kuhl et al., 2006). Self-regulatory competence enables a person to change between contrasting affective states in a suitable form, taking into account his or her individual needs and according to his or her own assessment of the situational or task-related requirements (Kaschel & Kuhl, 2004). Thus, coaching should therefore aim at supporting the client's self-regulatory competences, notably affect regulation.

Self-Motivation and Self-Relaxation

Self-competences comprise a large number of individual skills (e.g., Kaschel & Kuhl, 2004). In coaching, two self-competences play a particularly decisive role: self-motivation and self-relaxation. *Self-motivation* is the ability to gain something positive even from unpleasant things (Kazén et al., 2015). To overcome volitional inhibition associated with low positive affect and intention formation, the ability to motivate oneself is required. This ability demands access to the self with its extended experiential network (i.e., extension memory): this experiential network can recall positive sides associated with the current goal or intention, which stimulates positive affect needed to implement an unpleasant intention (Kuhl et al., 2015). *Self-relaxation* is the ability to downregulate negative affect and to cope with negative events either by finding appropriate options for action or, when those events cannot be reversed by any action (e.g., after the death of a loved person), through reassessment and the creation of meaning (Kuhl, 2000a). Consequently, self-relaxation is particularly necessary in the case of impaired self-access associated with perseverating negative affect.

How can self-competences be promoted in coaching? A first step is raising awareness through self-reflection, which is one of the central topics in coaching (e.g., Schmidt-Lellek, 2017a). In a second step, the focus shifts to developing the

ability to self-regulate affect. According to a familiar developmental principle (e.g., Vygotsky, 1978), self-regulation develops by internalizing external regulation, for example, when parents repeatedly soothe a fearful child until it learns soothing her- or himself. In an effort to specify the mechanisms underlying this developmental process, Kuhl (2000a) spelled out the *systems conditioning model*, which is based on the principle of classical conditioning (Pavlov's paradigm). However, whereas in Pavlov's paradigm two *stimuli* had to be linked (e.g., the ring of a bell and the smell of meat), promoting the self-regulation of emotions two systems have to be connected: the self-system and the emotion-system. According to Pavlov, the connection between two stimuli is strengthened in the brain when they occur in quick succession (<1 s). In a similar way, the connection between the self-system and the emotion-system (i.e., systems conditioning) is strengthened, when those two systems are activated in quick succession. This is the case when the coach's counter-regulation of the clients' discouraged or unsettled self-expressions repeatedly occurs briefly (<1 s) after the client's self-system is activated: for example, when the client expresses his or her own feelings and feels understood and comforted by the coach. This coupling of self-expression and external emotion regulation strengthens the connection between the self-system and the emotion-system with the effect that the self-system can later unconsciously activate emotion regulation by itself. Putting this functional analysis in colloquial terms, we can say: The client has learned to comfort "him- or herself."

According to the systems conditioning model, the ability of self-motivation can be acquired when the coach repeatedly and promptly provides encouragement when the client expresses some loss of motivation. For example, when mentioning an uncompleted task, an unpleasant goal, or a listless state of mind. In other words, the coaches' prompt and repeated responsivity to the client's self-expression of discouragement enables the client to self-generate positive affect for the implementation of difficult tasks. He or she can, thus, learn to maintain or restore courage and energy for action by him- or herself even for difficult goals (self-motivation). In a similar vein, self-relaxation can be promoted by promptly and appropriately comforting a client expressing some negative affect. The ability of self-relaxation reassures the client that he or she can cope with aversive events in a self-confrontational way, that is without resorting to defense mechanisms such as euphemism, denial, or actionism. As mentioned before, self-confrontation involves the ability to tolerate negative affect (i.e., focusing on negative events) and opening one's self for exploring personal implications and possible solutions toward coping with the experience.

Self-Opening

According to the systems conditioning model, a trusting relationship is a necessary condition for internalizing external encouragement or comforting, respectively. System-conditioning processes, which link the self with coaching interventions, only function if the client's self-system is activated during the session. This is due

to the simple reason that, from a functional analysis point of view, an externally controlled event (e.g., being encouraged or comforted) cannot be integrated into the self (i.e. internalized) unless the self is activated (e.g., Kuhl et al., 2015): when somebody blocks "him- or herself" (or "his or her self") vis-à-vis the coach, even successful encouragement or comforting attempts cannot become self-competences in terms of being integrated into the self (which implies the ability to "self-initiate" them when needed). Hence, "self-opening," that is the ability and readiness to share one's feelings with another person is a prerequisite for the acquisition and utilization of any self-competence. Moreover, tolerating aversive states of mind is substantially facilitated in a trusting relationship. PSI theory explores the functional basis of this popular insight: basic trust promotes a deep form of self-positivity that maintains a positive balance even under conditions of self-confrontation with aversive experience (Kuhl et al., 2017). For example, feeling accepted despite admitting mistakes or focusing on some painful experience helps clients to dare to confront themselves with negative feelings they might otherwise neglect or ignore. Accordingly, we can say that our neuro-psychological analysis is in accordance with some generally accepted coaching essentials: "For many coaches the quality of the coaching relationship is not just a critical success factor, but *the* critical success factor in successful coaching outcomes" (Bluckert, 2005, p. 336).

Taken together, many exercises and approaches that show a self-opening effect can contribute to the development of self-regulatory competences by gradually bringing behaviors highlighted by the coach under self-guidance (not only self-motivation and self-relaxation but also self-reflection, balancing, improvisation, compassion, planning, and many more). The extended experiential network underlying the self implies that self-opening facilitates perceiving or creating choices among possible perspectives, meanings, or actions, which is tantamount to free oneself from the narrow scope provided by object recognition system. A possible exercise toward widening one's perspective is provided by the *wonder wheel* (Storch et al., 2018). A rich selection of PSI-compatible coaching tools can be found in the literature on solution-oriented counseling: through their indirect, context-expanding, and imaginative approach, the various methods seem to be able to counteract the lack of access to the extension memory and the self-system. Hypothetical solutions such as the *miracle question* (e.g., De Shazer & Dolan, 2012) stimulate the imagination and the extension memory with its overview of autobiographical experiences. As a result, the associated knowledge can actively be used to search for behavioral alternatives. Finally, extension memory is strongly networked with body sensations and emotions (e.g., Dawson & Schell, 1982; Kuhl et al., 2015). That is why reflection on one's own body can be regarded as another method facilitating self-access and self-competences associated with it. Even little questions may be helpful: How do I sit or stand? How does it feel? As numerous as the facets of self-regulatory competences are, so are the exercises that support the development and training of these competences. An overview of some exercises that strengthen self-growth and action control can be found in Storch et al. (2018).

At the same time, successful coaching requires a personal encounter with a person who has the courage to "opening up himself or herself to the client's experience"

(Schmidt-Lellek, 2017b, p. 170) and who is able to answer them promptly and appropriately in such a way that calming and encouraging experiences actually occur (Kuhl, 2000b). In other words, the coach's own self-regulatory competences are of central importance, too. Self-competences, notably self-relaxation and self-motivation, enable him or her to get involved in the complexity of a theory-based coaching process. In many cases, for promoting the self-development of coaches and therapists some comprehensive feedback about their own self-regulatory competences may suffice (Alsleben & Kuhl, 2011; Kaschel & Kuhl, 2004; www.impart.de). Self-development can be further advanced by training methods that are selected on the basis of a fine-grained assessment of self-competences and underlying systems interactions (www.psi-theorie.com). A brief description of similar applications of this assessment-based approach to self-competence training can be found in a recent article (Kuhl et al., 2021, Sect. 7.2).

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Approaches to the Coaching Process: An Interaction-Analytical View

Patrizia M. Ianiro-Dahm and Simone Kauffeld

Introduction

Our modern world continuously confronts individuals with changes, complex decision-making options and pressure to be more flexible in both private and professional contexts (Giddens, 1991). The conditions of modern life can be perceived equally as freedom or excessive demands. They require a high degree of self-exploration and self-reflection from the individual. As a consulting method aimed at supporting individual development, coaching has become increasingly important in this context (Stelter, 2014).

Although coaching has enjoyed growing popularity for decades, there was initially a lack of methodologically reflected empiricism and theory about coaching. It is only since the 1990s that the imbalance between market-driven pragmatism and a scientific foundation in coaching has been gradually eliminated. Since then, a growing number of empirical studies have shown that coaching works (Wasylyshyn, 2003; Green et al., 2005; Passmore & Gibbes, 2007; Grant et al., 2010; Smither, 2011; Jones et al., 2016). Overall, however, coaching research is still only in its beginnings—especially with regard to evidence-based and process-related research (Baron & Morin, 2009; Grant, 2005; Theeboom et al., 2014). Instead of individual case studies, the scientific establishment of coaching requires more studies with sufficiently large samples, more quantitative research and more randomized controlled research designs (Grant et al., 2010).

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It is particularly important to clarify in what way and under what circumstances coaching is helpful for a client. Such findings are important not only for the purpose of quality assurance in coaching. They also offer orientation for practicing coaches and help to design further training courses.

Insights that answer the question of how coaching works can only be gained to a limited extent through retrospective surveys of coach and client. Rather, it must be possible to gain direct insight into the coaching process so it does not remain a black box. But what makes the coaching process what it is?

The Coaching Process: From General Structure to Interaction

It seems obvious to include in the coaching process everything that happens between the first and last contact between coach and client. This consideration also includes, for example preparation by the coach, thoughts and developmental steps of the client between sessions, as well as the coaching follow-up. The coaching process can be described on the one hand in terms of phases with a different focus, and on the other hand in terms of the interaction between coach and client. The description of the coaching process in phases represents an attempt to identify general structures and procedures of coaching processes—despite the huge variety of approaches and methods (Schiessler, 2009). Common models of the coaching process distinguish between an entry, main and final phase. The models differ in their degree of differentiation. However, there is a great deal of agreement with regard to what happens in the three central process phases (Schiessler, 2009). In the initial phase, for example the focus is generally on the design of the first contact with the client and clarification of the assignment. The initial phase serves to discuss the framework, the conditions for coaching and to lay the foundation for a positive relationship in further coaching. The phase is usually marked with a formal and psychological contract (in the sense of a working alliance). The focus of the main coaching phase is to clarify the client's initial situation, to work out the coaching goals (actual/target comparison) and possible solutions. In all models of the coaching process, the final phase is also described as an important part of professional coaching. In this phase, the coach and client review the coaching process together and discuss future steps. The main focus is on the evaluation of the client's goal attainment and learning process. In the final session, a further discussion can be arranged if necessary, in which the transfer and learning progress of the client is discussed again with a time lag (see Rauen, 2005; Fischer-Epe, 2002: Schreyögg, 1998; Vogelauer, 2002).

The description of the coaching process on the basis of phases represents a meta-perspective view, making it possible to identify commonalities of professional coaching processes. However, to be able to identify coach or client behaviour that is critical for success or to work out particularities and patterns in the interaction between coach and client, a micro-perspective view of the coaching process is

necessary. The focus is then on what happens between coach and client within the sessions and what is potentially observable and recordable. The smallest observable units of the coaching process are the behaviours with which the coach and client relate to each other within a session. Studies focusing on the interaction between coach and client have so far only been conducted sporadically, although coaching success is often attributed to the complex interaction between coach and client (Cavanagh, 2006). The coach and client's working relationship develops from their dynamic interaction, the quality of which distinguishes successful from less successful coaching. (McKenna & Davis, 2009).

A good working relationship in coaching is characterized by an effective bond between coach and client, in which the development of goals and solutions are the main focus (McKenna & Davis, 2009). Studies based on retrospective surveys of coaching clients (Baron & Morin, 2009; De Haan, 2008), as well as initial behavioural-based analyses of coach–client interaction (Greif, 2010; Ianiro & Kauffeld, 2014; Ianiro et al., 2014), confirm the relationship is not only a central factor but also one that can be influenced by the coach. These results are consistent with findings from related areas, e.g. psychotherapy. There it was found the working relationship between therapist and client is the most important factor that can be influenced. It is also more important than the therapy technique (Asay & Lambert, 1999). Psychotherapy research has succeeded in shedding light on the therapeutic process and the active ingredients of the therapist–client relationship (Hill, 1990). Coaching research also has the task of analyzing micro-processes in coaching and clarifying the effectiveness of a positive working relationship (O'Broin & Palmer, 2010).

An important procedure on the way to this is the systematic observation of the interaction between coach and client, based on written coaching conversations or video recordings. They can show which interaction behaviour of coach and client is beneficial for the course of the coaching. In addition to the direct recording of interaction dynamics, behavioural observation can also record unconscious or difficult-to-control behaviour of the actors. As a result, greater accuracy can be achieved than with self-reports (Nisbett & Wilson, 1977; Schermuly & Scholl, 2012). Especially since it can be assumed that, due to the high cognitive load during a session, coach and client can only provide limited information about the process afterwards. Recent studies also show that behaviours related to the work relationship, in particular, are perceived very differently by coach and client (Baron et al., 2010; De Haan et al., 2013).

Analysis of the interaction between coach and client, like any social interaction, is characterized by basic rules and principles of interpersonal communication (Nadler, 2005). Interpersonal communication characterizes a dynamic process in which verbal and non-verbal messages overlap and which is characterized by principles of reciprocity and interdependence (Burgoon et al., 1995; Gouldner, 1960). Reciprocity in coaching means that the coach and client (consciously or unconsciously) orient themselves to basic norms of give and take. In coaching, the interdependent character of communication is shown, for example by the way, the coach begins the interaction determining certain behavioural options of the client (Kelley et al., 2003).

Repeated interactions between coach and client lead to stable patterns of behaviour, on which the coaching relationship then develops (Burgoon et al., 1995).

While the coach and client exchange content messages and clarify meanings via their verbal communication (e.g. clarify the assignment), the non-verbal level serves in particular to express relationship-relevant messages (e.g. sympathy and closeness). Both the content-related and the interpersonal level of communication are relevant for the success of coaching. In the following, research approaches are outlined in which insights into the verbal and non-verbal interaction behaviour of coach and client have been gathered.

The Verbal Interaction Behaviour of Coach and Client

Verbal messages are used consciously and functionally in coaching. The functional meaning of language and the specific use of certain content and language-based coaching techniques (e.g. solution-oriented question techniques) are part of the standard repertoire of coaching training. Most coaches describe their approach as integrative; they combine different coaching techniques and approaches in the coaching process (Grant et al., 2010; Grant & O'Hara, 2006).

Initial research studies have focused on the significance of certain formulations in coaching and the specific effects of verbal coaching techniques on the coach–client relationship and the success of coaching. A qualitative-empirical research study showed, for example how linguistic analysis methods can be used to decipher the functional meaning of verbal messages in the coach-client interaction (Graf et al., 2010). Using transcripts of two coaching conversations, Graf et al. (2010) illustrate how concrete formulations of coach and client, their respective speech components, and the setting of pauses can be related to the clarification of roles and the quality of the contact between coach and client. On the basis of such linguistic analyses of coaching conversations, superordinate categories and concepts can be formulated that facilitate the understanding of and communication about interaction processes in coaching (Graf et al., 2010).

Initial quantitative-empirical research approaches also deal with the functional significance of language in coaching and contribute to the scientific foundation of practically proven question types/techniques. For example an experimental pilot study was able to empirically prove differences in the effect of the solution- versus problem-oriented questioning techniques on the basis of 74 self-coaching sessions. Although both techniques were helpful in approaching the coaching goals, solution-oriented questions led to greater progress on the part of the clients and a better understanding of their initial situation (Grant & O'Connor, 2010). This work has been further refined (Grant & O'Connor, 2018) with a larger sample size and showed how the combined positive effect with solution-focused questions improved outcomes.

A further quantitative-empirical study to explore the coaching process showed that open questions from the coach stimulated the development of solution

approaches by the client (Gessnitzer & Kauffeld, 2011). The analysis of Gessnitzer and Kauffeld (2011) was based on a complete, chronological recording of the communication of 33 coach-client dyads in the first career coaching session. The video-based analysis and coding of their interaction were carried out with the instrument act4consulting, which was specifically developed for the analysis of (mainly verbal) communication in coaching sessions (Hoppe & Kauffeld, 2010). With act4consulting, the statements of coach and client can be assigned to 4 super-ordinate competence areas (professional, methodological, self and social competence) and 47 subordinate content categories. Thus it is possible, for example to clearly distinguish knowledge-based content statements (professional competence) from summaries (methodological competence) or supporting statements (social competence). By assigning language content to functional categories, it was also possible to highlight central differences between coaching sessions and specialist consultations (the comparative sample included the interactions of 32 consultants-client dyads). As expected, the proportion of pure knowledge statements was significantly higher among specialist consultants than among coaches. While the satisfaction of the clients of a specialist consultancy was positively correlated with knowledge transfer ($p = .38^*$), this correlation did not exist for coaching clients. In contrast, coaching clients were more successful in terms of goal attainment when coaches conveyed less pure factual knowledge. Furthermore, the comparison of the consulting formats shows that open questions are asked significantly more frequently in coaching, whereas in other consulting formats, closed questions are asked more frequently. The more frequently chosen technique also correlated positively with the satisfaction of the respective client groups. While open questions in coaching were positively correlated with client satisfaction, in expert consultations, they led to lower satisfaction (Gessnitzer & Kauffeld, 2011).

In addition to the content-related focus on goals and solution approaches, the coaching process focuses on the affective bond between coach and client. The development of an affective bond is supported by supportive and appreciative verbal statements from the coach (Joseph, 2010). In a successful working relationship, the coach succeeds in cognitively stimulating the client as well as creating a positive affective connection. Now the question arises whether cognitive and affective aspects of coaching can and should be equally supported by verbal messages?

Interesting in this context is a current quantitative-empirical study based on the evaluation of 31 coaching processes (3 sessions each, a total of 93 sessions) (Gessnitzer & Kauffeld, 2015). It refers to verbal expressions of coach and client, which on the one hand, are related to tasks and goals in coaching, and on the other hand to commitment and appreciation. It turned out it was more relevant for the client's progress towards their goals, the coach and client agreed on tasks and goals than that relationship-relevant messages were verbalized by either of them.

However, the starting point for communication about goals played a central role: Positive effects on the client's progress towards the goal were only evident if the client formulated the tasks and goals themselves and the coach only had to agree. If the coach formulated tasks and goals in the coaching, negative effects on the progress towards the goal were shown, even if the client agreed with the coach's

suggestions. This is line with the results of a recent analysis of the data, based on an extended sample of 53 video recordings and independent observer ratings of the working alliance: dysfunctional procedural skills, such as closed questions or directive advices, predicted lower ratings on the coaching working alliance (Klonek et al., 2019). These results underscore the importance of clients taking an active role in coaching (Kaufman & Scoular, 2004) and developing their own goals and solutions (Spence & Grant, 2007). Coaches should support and strengthen the autonomy of clients to encourage change in coaching (see a study on motivational interviewing by Klonek et al., 2016).

Another interesting result of the study by Gessnitzer and Kauffeld (2015) is that verbal expressions related to the working alliance do not correlate with later assessments of the working alliance *by coach and client*. However, the recent analysis by Klonek et al. (2019) showed that functional socioemotional skills in particular, such as using summaries, bonding with the client, humorous expressions or appreciation, positively and significantly predict coach *empathy*. In the study, observers rated the overall impression of a coach's empathy within the session, which included verbal statements as well as non-verbal coach behaviour that demonstrated active interest and understanding of the client. As in psychotherapy (e.g. Moyers & Miller, 2013), a coach's empathy is considered an important ingredient within the developing coaching relationship (Will & Kauffeld, 2018).

This leads to two conclusions: firstly, the relationship between coach and client may not be sufficiently captured by retrospective surveys; secondly, the relationship between coach and client refers to different aspects (such as the working alliance or empathy), which in turn are related to complex interpersonal dynamics. It can apparently only partly be described by verbal statements. A useful addition seems to be the consideration of the non-verbal behaviour of the coach and client (Ianiro et al., 2012, 2014; Ianiro & Kauffeld, 2014).

On the Non-Verbal Interaction Behaviour of Coach and Client

The consideration of non-verbal behaviour is central to understanding interpersonal dynamics (Burgoon, 1995; Guerrero & Floyd, 2006). In social interaction, non-verbal messages serve to express relationship-relevant aspects such as status, sympathy and intimacy (Burgoon, 1994; Schachner et al., 2005). Non-verbal behaviour also plays an important role in the development and shaping of the coach–client relationship. For example the coach can clarify their role in the process and convey competence by speaking appropriately loudly, clearly and emphatically. Using non-verbal messages, coach and client can express how secure they feel. They can show whether and how much they like each other and in what way they influence each other (Burgoon, 1995; Guerrero & Floyd, 2006). The interpersonal meaning of non-verbal messages can be described on the basis of the basic interpersonal

Table 1 Examples of non-verbal dominance and affiliation (adapted from Schermuly & Scholl, 2011, p. 10 ff)

		Example Behaviour	
Base dimension		Coach	Client
Affiliation	Friendly	Keeps eye contact and smiles at the client while he is speaking. Always nodding.	Smiles back and also maintains eye contact. Listens carefully as the coach asks a question.
	Hostile	Looks impatiently at the clock, turns away from the client.	Silently expresses his displeasure, frowning and avoiding eye contact.
Dominance	Dominant	Interrupts the client to ask a question, speaks loudly and emphatically.	Leans back and adopts a relaxed position before answering
	Submissive	Plays with a pencil, looks at the client from below and hesitantly asks a question.	Sits slumped down on his chair, shrugs his shoulders and starts to speak softly.

dimensions, dominance and affiliation (Scholl, 2013), which are fundamental to the description of social behaviour as a whole (Luxen, 2005) and underlie numerous social psychological theories, e.g. interpersonal (Leary, 1957; Kiesler, 1983), evolutionary (Buss, 1996) or even motivational theories (McClelland, 1987).

The affiliation dimension can be used to describe how friendly (extreme positive pole) or hostile (extreme negative pole) an interaction partner behaves (Kiesler, 1996; Leary, 1957). Coaches and clients express friendliness non-verbally, for example through eye contact, smiles, short interpersonal distance and a soft voice (see Table 1; Schermuly & Scholl, 2011). Especially at the beginning of coaching, it is important the coach succeeds in creating a positive atmosphere and building a connection with the client (De Haan, 2008). The coach expresses attention and appreciation to the client through friendly facial expressions and gestures. When coach and client respond to each other's friendly signals, this supports the development of a positive affective bond (Burgoon et al., 2010). Openly aggressive behaviour, which would constitute extreme hostility, is rather untypical in the coaching context. However, it is conceivable a client who does not participate in coaching out of his own motivation (but rather, for example at the request of a supervisor) may send out dismissive signals. Coaches could also (unintentionally) express hostile signals in subtle ways, e.g. by turning away or showing impatience while the client is speaking. Such behaviour can be assumed to have a very negative influence on the working relationship.

Not all interpersonal behaviour can be assigned to the affiliation dimension. The second interpersonal basic dimension, dominance, includes the extreme poles of high submissiveness and high dominance. In common parlance, dominance is often understood in terms of coercion or intimidation and tends to have negative connotations. In this context, however, dominance is understood to mean self-confident, assertive behaviour which only acquires a corresponding positive or negative effect in interaction in combination with friendly or hostile gestures (Burgoon & Dunbar,

2000). According to this definition, coaches or clients behave in a non-verbally dominant manner if, for example they show space-taking or relaxed posture, gesticulate strongly, speak clearly and loudly, or interrupt the other person (Table 1; Schermuly & Scholl, 2011). Behaviours that express self-confidence and assertiveness also seem to be important for coaches. After all, coaches are the ones who structure the coaching process and guide clients through it (Grant, 2005). Furthermore, it seems to be important for a positive course of the coaching process that clients perceive their coach as competent as able to support them in their concerns. By expressing non-verbal dominance, coaches can underline both their competence and their role in the coaching process.

Affiliation and dominance signals are combined in interaction behaviour. For example a coach can show dominant-friendly or submissive-neutral behaviour in the interaction with the client.

The significance of dominance and affiliation for interaction has been investigated in numerous social and professional contexts, including friendships and partnerships (Jacobs, 2008) and also among therapists and clients (Heller et al., 1963; Tracey, 2004). Meanwhile, there are also first coaching studies in which the role of dominance and affiliation for coach-client interaction has been analyzed on the basis of observation data. Three empirical studies based on the complete recording of the interpersonal behaviour of coach and client showed affiliation and dominance play an important role both for the course and the results of coaching (Ianiro et al., 2012, 2013, 2014). Behavioural observations were based on the first coaching session of 30–48 coach-client dyads. With a focus on career entry and career, the coaching was particularly directed at university graduates. The non-verbal behaviour of the coach and client was analyzed with the tool for coding discussions (IKD, Schermuly & Scholl, 2011). All three studies showed the non-verbal dominance and affiliation of coach and client is linked to the course and success of coaching (Table 2). Specifically, the results of the first study indicate that dominance expressed by the coach (in the sense of self-confidence) has a positive effect on the client's achievement of goals. In addition, clients who resembled their coaches in their non-verbal behaviour assessed the relationship with their coach more positively and gave higher values for the achievement of goals at the end of the coaching (Ianiro et al., 2012).

In another study, the non-verbal behaviour of the coach and client was analyzed at the micro-process level. Taking into account the temporal sequence of interaction behaviour, it was shown that coach and client influenced each other in their affiliation and dominance behaviour (Ianiro et al., 2014). In this context, sequences and patterns of reciprocal interpersonal behaviour were identified that were particularly relevant for the coach–client relationship. For example the friendliness of the coach was followed by the friendliness of the client in the interaction (and vice versa). Reciprocal friendliness had a positive effect on the relationship quality perceived by the client. In addition, only dominant-friendly coach behaviour favoured the client's dominance behaviour. All other styles of the coach tended to induce restrained, passive (submissive) behaviour of the client. The stimulation of dominant behaviour of the client proved to be important, as this was positive for the client's achievement

Table 2 Analysis of coach-client interaction based on observation data: results and implications

Focus of analysis	Study	Key results	Practical implications for coaches
Verbal	Gessnitzer and Kauffeld (2011)	In successful coaching sessions, more open questions are asked, and less factual knowledge is conveyed. – The more open questions were asked in coaching, the happier the client was	Acquisition of open question techniques – Avoidance of fact-based knowledge transfer – Restraint in setting tasks/goals in coaching; create enough space for the client to develop and formulate individual goals themselves
	Gessnitzer and Kauffeld (2015)	– Agreement on tasks/goals is more important for goal progress than relationship-relevant messages from coach or client. – The more often coach and client agree on tasks/goals of the coaching, the greater the client's progress towards the goal – However: agreement on tasks/goals only has a positive effect on the client's progress towards the goal if the client formulates the task/goal and the coach agrees (negative effect if the coach is the initiator)	
Non-verbal	Ianiro et al. (2012)	– The (non-verbal) more dominant the coach, the higher the client's goal achievement. – Non-verbal similarity leads to higher goal achievement and more positive assessments of the relationship quality by the client.	Especially at the beginning of the coaching process: – Acquisition of knowledge about the effect of non-verbal behaviour – Acquisition of a dominant-friendly style to create a positive atmosphere, to express competence and self-confidence, to steer the process and to stimulate the client (important: authenticity) Avoidance of dominant-neutral and (subtle) hostile behaviour; attention to non-verbal signals of the client Awareness of one's own state of mind before the coaching, acquisition of strategies to influence one's own state of mind
	Ianiro et al. (2014)	– Reciprocal friendliness of coach and client lead to positive assessments of the relationship quality by the client. – Only dominant-friendly coach behaviour will lead to dominant behaviour of the client. – Dominant behaviour of the client is positively correlated with the achievement of objectives.	
	Ianiro and Kauffeld (2014)	– Positive mood of the coach before the session favours dominant-friendly behaviour in the session and leads to a more positive assessment of the relationship quality by the client	

of his goals. Submissive behaviour of the client, however, correlated negatively with the final goal achievement ($r = -.49$, $p < .01$). The results show—similar to the study by Gessnitzer and Kauffeld (2015, see above)—that coaching success is more likely to occur when the client takes an active role in the process.

The third study examined how the mood of the coach before a session is reflected in the session. It is known from group and leadership research that interaction partners influence each other in their moods and the mood also has an effect on the quality of the interaction (Barsade, 2002; Sy et al., 2005). The study by Ianiro and Kauffeld (2014) showed such dynamics are also observable in coach-client interaction. It was shown that a good mood of the coach in advance—in the sense of positive affect and composure—favours both dominant-friendly coach behaviour and positive relationship assessments of the client. Furthermore, there were first indications of an indirect influence on the client's interaction behaviour; the better the mood of the coach, the more often the coach behaved dominant-friendly in the session, the more often dominant-friendly behaviour of the client occurred, which in turn was associated with positive assessments of the relationship by the client (Ianiro & Kauffeld, 2014).

In practice, the results of the three studies lead to the conclusion coaches should pay the highest attention to their emotional state and interpersonal signals; they are crucial for a positive relationship with the client and can contribute significantly to the success of coaching. Table 2 provides an overview of practical recommendations for coaches on how to design the coaching process, resulting from the studies outlined above.

Conclusion

Research concerning the coaching process is still in its beginnings; at the same time, coaching is becoming increasingly important as a consulting method. This chapter shows how different approaches can be used to analyse the coaching process scientifically. At first, a distinction is made between a macro and a micro-perspective. While the macro-perspective describes process phases and procedures with a different focus in terms of content, the micro-perspective refers to the direct interaction between coach and client. The latter is of particular importance for process research; it is shown that an analysis on the micro-process level makes it possible to work out success-critical interaction behaviour, patterns and dynamics. Central to this is the direct observation of the coach-client interaction, especially in connection with video analyses. The direct observation of the interaction allows more valid statements about the working relationship between coach and client. This is important because, as is shown, initial studies suggest its particular importance for coaching success.

Two different interaction-analytical research approaches are outlined in more detail in this paper, one focusing on verbal and the other on non-verbal interaction behaviour. In the studies presented, both verbal and non-verbal behavioural

sequences are associated with the client's work relationship and success. Practical implications are then discussed, and the question is explored how the coach can positively shape the relationship and support the client's success in the process.

What could be the next steps in coaching process research? Future research could integrate the results of the studies presented and explore how verbal and non-verbal communication in coaching interact. Finally, it is known that non-verbal signals can amplify or attenuate verbal messages (Jones & Guerrero, 2001).

Overall, it seems desirable for a holistic understanding of the coaching process to link micro-processes with macro-perspective observations of the coaching process. This could be achieved, for example if the interaction behaviour of coach and client (micro-processes) is observed over several sessions and analysed in connection with process phases (macro-perspective). This could be used to check whether there are any significant phase-specific differences in the interaction behaviour of coach and client and when which behaviour is particularly important with regard to the coaching success of the client. Further questions that await investigation are:

– In which coaching phase is it particularly important that communication about tasks and goals starts from the client, and does it make a difference whether the client behaves non-verbally dominant or submissively?
– -Is self-assurance and non-verbal friendliness of the coach in the contact phase most important, and is this more important than verbal messages expressing appreciation?
– -Is it possible to activate very reserved clients non-verbally, and should this be successful right at the beginning of the coaching or is this especially important in the main phase of the coaching, where coach and client work out solution steps? By answering these questions, one could continue on the path of the interaction-analytical approach and interlink practice and research more closely.

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Assessment in Coaching

Heidi Möller and Silja Kotte

Case Study

The client, in his mid-40s, attends his first coaching session. He has been employed at a medium-sized company for several years. As an executive, he has been responsible for technical customer services for the past 3 years. In his role, he is in charge of optimizing customer services across several branches in the region. He reported that he was much appreciated for reliably identifying and addressing problems as well as implementing solutions. However, in his most recent appraisal interview, his boss told him to take coaching sessions to improve his social skills and empathy as this would help him collaborate with the different branches. The client appeared confused about this feedback but was determined to work on himself.

What does the coach do to get an idea of the client and his situation? How does the coach align the coaching process to these insights? There is a broad range of possibilities: the coach could choose an intuitively guided, interaction-based assessment process. In this case, the coach observes their own reactions to the client. For instance, the coach may get an idea of the client's social skills based on their first interaction. The coach could also proceed in a very structured way and use an interview guide to assess the client's coaching background, personal and professional biography, organizational context and specific management tasks in the organization. The coach can also make use of assessment tools. For instance, the client can be asked to complete a self-assessment questionnaire on social skills or to

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use symbols to portray his perception of the organizational environment visually. All of these approaches fall under what we refer to as *assessment* in coaching.

Introduction

Diagnostics originates from the Greek verb *diagignóskein*. As this verb means 'to know exactly' and "to decide," it combines different facets of perceiving and processing information, from recognition to decision making (Kaegi, 1904). The term *diagnostics* is established in the medical context, where it refers to the detection and categorization of illnesses and their causes. The fact that this can have a deficit-oriented rather than resource-oriented connotation is the reason why many coaches have felt uncomfortable with the term. For this reason, the term *assessment* is now widely used in coaching and wider occupational psychology.

To approach assessment in coaching in a differentiated manner, one must become aware of the limited perspectives that are offered by different schools of thought in coaching. Moreover, a systematic assessment procedure provides the required basis for professional consultation. Intuitive procedures that are based on personal preferences and presumptions are vulnerable to the influence of the coach's own, distorted perceptions due to blind spots and flawed routines.

Therefore, it makes sense to broadly understand assessment as "the systematic gathering and processing of information with the aim of justifying, controlling and optimizing decisions and resulting actions. [...]" (own translation; Jäger & Petermann, 1995, p. 11). The (initial) exploration, which is always part of the coaching process, must be systematized and structured. Otherwise, it is not possible to derive appropriate interventions over the course of the coaching process. In fact, the relevance of coaches having assessment competence has been increasingly stressed (e.g., Leitner, 2008). Goal setting as well as a problem clarification have been identified as key factors for successful coaching (Greif, 2008; Greif et al., 2010; Müller & Kotte, 2020).

It is important to note that the systematic gathering and processing of information in coaching does not only refer to the individual (i.e., the coaching client) but also to their environment (i.e., groups, teams, organizations, situations). Workplace coaching always takes place where person and organization come together. Thus, relevant characteristics at different levels (ranging from the individual client to their organization) and their interplay must be identified and integrated to come to a preliminary diagnosis, assessment, or prognosis (Jäger & Petermann, 1995), which can then be used to plan the coaching process. The present chapter focuses on the initial assessment and will not discuss ongoing assessment over the course of the coaching engagement. Yet, the latter is not to be neglected as coaching is a continuous process.

A coach's assessment approach is always an expression of their professional background. In the UK, coaching is strongly influenced by *coaching psychology*. In Germany and much of central Europe, the influences and backgrounds in coaching

are more diverse: economists, theologians, lawyers, social workers, political scientists, philosophers, educators, and psychologists have their own perspectives which guide their coaching practice. Particularly in the early stages of the coaching process, these perspectives can be impactful on the coach's perception of the case. Coaches will set priorities based on their professional backgrounds and will, in any case—at least implicitly—conduct an assessment: they gather information to understand the client and their context and to adjust their coaching approach accordingly (Jäger & Petermann, 1995). The connects and interpretations they make will reflect their training, experience and philosophical perspective and will vary in how much they are scientifically founded or led by subjective assumptions.

The State of Research

A comprehensive review of assessment approaches was undertaken by Möller and Kotte (2013). A few other works have provided more specific reviews of multiple tools and the assessment and feedback process (e.g., Passmore, 2012).

The vast majority of published work on the theme of assessment in coaching or counseling are individual articles or book chapters. These often focus on a single assessment tool, model, or school of thought. For example, there are contributions from person-centered theory (Speierer et al., 2010 on the Differential Incongruence Model), Gestalt therapy (Blankertz, 2008, on the use of the Gestalt Type Indicator), psychodynamic counseling (West-Leuer, 2003, on a psychoanalytically influenced understanding of assessment in coaching) or psychodrama (Burmeister, 2004; Krall & Schulze, 2004).

In addition, there is a wealth of individual contributions describing the use of specific assessment tools. These include personality inventories, leadership style questionnaires, work-life-balance screenings, archetype-centered tools, competence assessment, psychodramatic role plays, the creative use of media, and multisource feedback (e.g., Beddoes-Jones & Miller, 2007; Burke, 2008; Candis Best, 2010; Nowack, 2007; Schaller, 2009; Schaeffner, 2004; Langhainzl, 2000; Staggs & Hurley, 2007).

Until recently, attempts to structure and systematize assessment approaches in coaching were limited to the use of psychometric methods (Passmore, 2007, 2012). Passmore (2007) gives a general introduction to psychometric tools: Along with a review of quality criteria for psychometric tools, different types of assessment (personality, ability and motivation assessments) and different client groups (individuals and teams) are distinguished. The volume also presents a number of individual psychometric tools and their appropriate use in coaching, from personality and motivation questionnaires to leadership behavior, emotional intelligence, and resilience questionnaires.

In the field of psychometric assessment, there are also initial empirical studies on the extent to which coaches use psychometric methods and why they do so at all (Harper, 2008; McDowall & Smewing, 2009). A survey from the UK (McDowall &

Smewing, 2009) found that almost 90% of surveyed coaches used psychometric methods. The most frequently used were personality questionnaires (87%) and multisource feedback (57%). By using psychometric tools, coaches not only wanted to promote the client's self-exploration and refine their own (self-) perception but also used these tools for planning and managing the coaching process (Harper, 2008). Corporate interests are also in play: among the reasons for the use of psychometric tools were the expectations of the organization to employ existing tools with the aim of generating return-on-investment on licensing fees, obtaining more tangible results in the form of printed result reports as well as maintaining an established language for feedback processes. The fact that the reasons mentioned for the use of psychometric tools do not only refer to the coach and client themselves but explicitly refer to organizational needs makes it clear that assessment in coaching cannot only be thought of as part of the dyadic coach-client relationship but as a process that is situated in an organizational context and entails a wider coach-client-organization relationship.

Finally, the different functions of assessment in coaching have only been discussed in a rudimentary form so far. Passmore (2007, 2012) distinguishes between two orientations of assessment in coaching. A profile-oriented approach focuses on individual characteristics of the client, e.g., their skills, attitudes, or other personal attributes and can help the client develop greater self-awareness. A criterion- or norm-oriented approach explicitly accounts for job requirements and person-organization fit and allows a comparison with others in similar-level roles.

Diverse Approaches to Assessment in Coaching and Their Systematization

The following section aims to offer a systematization of assessment approaches and tools. First, different schools of thought regarding assessment in coaching will be introduced. Second, a systematization of assessment tools will be presented.

Schools of Thought in Coaching Assessment

Different schools of thought in coaching (Gestalt, psychodynamic, etc.) have their own specific assessment approaches.

Psychodynamic coaches (Lohmer & Giernalczyk, 2012; Haubl, 2008; West-Leuer & Sies, 2003) prefer approaches to coaching assessment that enable them to explore the unconscious of individuals, teams, and organizations. Methodologically, emphasis is placed on scenic understanding (Argelander, 2011) and the exploration of transference and countertransference phenomena. The encounter between coach and client is of particular importance; alternating between involvement and

distancing by the coach is an essential feature of a psychodynamic assessment process. Benecke and Möller (2013) emphasize the importance of (personality) structure assessment for executives in order to systematically record their potential and risk factors.

Coaches following Morenos' (1996) *psychodramatic approach* refers to Moreno's role theory and starts at the client's inner scene, i.e., at their subjective experience of concrete situations in certain spatial, temporal, and social contexts. This inner scene is transferred (von Ameln, 2013) into a material scenic arrangement by means of various psychodramatic techniques and methods (role assumption, visualization of structures in space). A surplus reality can emerge, a process that facilitates the development of new ways of thinking and acting. In this way, coaches who work with psychodramatic methods link assessment and intervention very closely and focus on spontaneity and creativity, for example, by using spontaneity tests. Sociometric methods are mostly used at the individual or team level. At an organizational level, assessment often takes place in the form of visualization of structures in space (constellations).

For *Gestalt-oriented coaches*, contact is the central phenomenon in coaching and therapy, which forms the starting point of any assessment (Looss, 1999, 2013). Accordingly, Gestalt coaches assess in a process-oriented way along with the contact patterns they experience with their coaching clients, such as confluence, introjection, projection, deflection, retroflection, and egotism. These contact patterns include the ones that become obvious in the coach-client-interaction and those patterns that emerge in the client's narratives. Gestalt-oriented assessment is understood as a co-creation of coach and client as both jointly examine contact events. The Gestalt-oriented view of the client and their organizational context focuses on role behavior in the interplay between the work context (there and then) and the coaching situation (here and now). The coach, with their own perception and inner events, is considered to be the most important assessment tool (Looss, 2013).

Cognitive-behavioral coaching primarily centers around the client's learning history. Problem analysis in cognitive-behavioral coaching includes splitting up unwanted behavior into solvable sub-problems, formulating actual and target states, analyzing conditions that lead to current dysfunctional behavior, and identifying conditions that may lead to the target behavior (Reinecker, 1999). Organizational and environmental variables, social conditions, deficits and resources, personality characteristics, emotions, cognitive patterns, motivation, and self-regulation are vital parts of a cognitive-behavioral assessment in coaching. Stavemann and Stavemann (2013) identify three central problem areas and thus three main focuses that are addressed by cognitive-behavioral assessment: self-esteem problems, existential problems and frustration intolerance. In problem analysis, coaches with cognitive-behavioral orientation not only focus on existing problems but also on symptom gains that contribute to their maintenance. They understand a comprehensive problem analysis as a basis for building up change plans together with the client.

Systematization of Assessment Approaches in Coaching: The Kassel Coaching Grid

Given the diversity of assessment approaches, the question arises as to how an appropriate approach for a specific coaching case can be selected. The Kassel Coaching Grid (Möller & Kotte, 2013) presented below offers an overview of how different approaches can be systematized as well as a guide on how to select an appropriate assessment for a given coaching case.

The different assessment approaches are systematized and described along with three questions: What is captured? How is it captured? Who captures it?

1. What is captured? The content
   This question deals with the content of the assessment: Is it of particular relevance to assess the client as an individual in their motivational structure, personality, competencies, etc. (as in the case of a personality inventory)? Is the primary aim to shed light on the client's interactions with their organization, i.e., the client's function, role, and integration in a team (as in the case of team constellations)? Or is the focus on the organizational environment (as in the analysis of the organization's formal and informal structure)?
2. How is the content captured? The tool
   A distinction can be made along a continuum as to whether the assessment tool is the coach as part of an interaction-based assessment process (e.g., exploring countertransferences in the language of psychodynamic coaching, or contact-based assessments in the language of a Gestalt-oriented approach), or whether a standardized test is used (e.g., the Picture Story Excercise as a projective test, a psychometric personality questionnaire or a standardized interaction analysis).
3. Who captures the content? The source of information
   On the one hand, the source of information can be the client providing it, e.g., as part of a self-report personality questionnaire. On the other hand, other reports are a valuable source of information, too. They can be gathered using tools like potential analyses, multisource feedbacks or using behavioral samples in role plays or job shadowing.

Every assessment tool can be described along with these three questions, giving it a unique assessment profile. An example is given in Fig. 1, which displays the Bochum Inventory of Occupational Personality Description (BIP) within the Kassel Coaching Grid.

Determining characteristic profiles of different assessment tools using the proposed three-dimensional framework facilitates their comparison with each other and helps with the selection of appropriate tools in a given coaching case. In order to reap the benefits of a systematic assessment, all three main areas of content should be considered: the client, the organization and the intersection between them (i.e., role and team). Additionally, the chosen tools should complement each other in terms of the continuum between the coach as a tool and standardized assessments and in terms the sources of information.
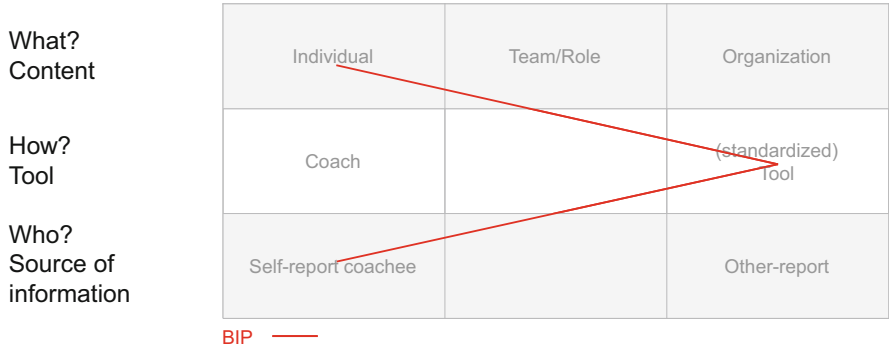
Fig. 1 Profile of the Bochum Inventory of Occupational Personality Description within the Kassel Coaching Grid (Möller & Kotte, 2013, p. 325)
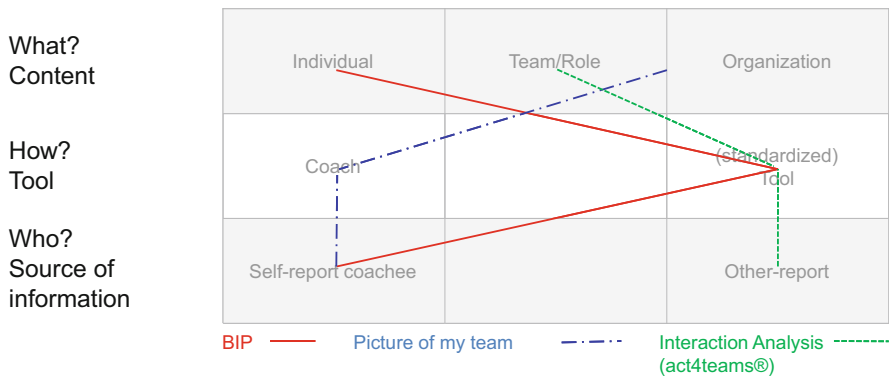
Fig. 2 Comparison of three assessment tool profiles (Möller & Kotte, 2013, p. 326)

Following this framework can thus serve to determine a suitable combination of assessments for the individual coaching case. For instance, if the coaching of an executive is concerned with establishing their role within a team, the BIP could be complemented by having the client draw a picture of their team (Nowak, 2013). If the assessment of contact patterns in the coach-client interaction points to substantial discrepancies between self-perception and perception by others and if one goal of coaching is to improve the client's interaction in team meetings, the coach could also use an interaction analysis (Kauffeld & Gessnitzer, 2013). This is illustrated in Fig. 2.

The *Kassel Coaching Inventory* (Möller & Kotte, 2013) is a practice-oriented complement to the Kassel Coaching Grid. Usually, the selection and use of different assessment tools is not the first step in the assessment process in coaching. For this first step, we suggest the use of the *Kassel Coaching Inventory*. This interview guide can be used as a "minimal procedure" for assessment in coaching. Depending on the specific case, the *Kassel Coaching Inventory* alone can be sufficient for an initial

assessment, or it can be complemented with other assessment tools. As it systematically captures the initial situation at the beginning of a coaching engagement, it can also be used as a tool for documentation and evaluation.

The *Kassel Coaching Inventory* comprises five sections: coaching background, professional biography and organizational context, personal biography, assessment of the coach-client interaction and management tasks.

The Importance of Diagnostics in Coaching

Systematic assessment can increase the effectiveness of coaching. Below, we present a number of arguments in favor of a systematic approach to assessment in coaching (Möller & Kotte, 2013).

1. The effort invested in a thorough assessment at the beginning of a coaching process, experience shows, pays off later. Usually, assessments already stimulate self-reflection.
2. If unstructured questions are asked in the initial meeting, there is a risk of overlooking essential information and thus acting negligently. Standardization in the assessment process forces the coach to ask critical questions which may not be obvious using their preferred coaching approach but. These can help uncover blind spots and lead to important new insights.
3. Many clients find assessments to be helpful. Numbers, data, and facts can help reduce their fear of the coaching process, which may be difficult to grasp otherwise. Sometimes, clients also prefer the use of standardized questionnaires to help them evaluate the impact of the coaching process (McDowall & Smewing, 2009).
4. The use of established, scientifically based tools signals the professional nature of the coaches' approach to coaching and can support the coach's self-presentation in an organizational context.
5. In the coaching process, coaches usually only get to know the client's constructions of their occupational life. Thus, they are in danger of adopting too much of their client's constructions of reality. The use of assessment tools like multisource feedback or job shadowing (Kotte & Künzel, 2013; Kaul, 2013) allows other views besides those of the coach and the client to be brought into the coaching conversation.

A systematic assessment procedure at the beginning of a coaching process is, in our view, worth the effort. It can contribute to quality assurance and facilitates a greater level of objectivity and evidence-based approach to the coaching process.

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Behavioral Modification and Its Relevance in Coaching

Martin Hautzinger

Case Study

Emma, a 53-year-old successful lawyer, seeks help. After years as an employee in a large law firm, she became self-employed about 15 years ago. Their business started well, grew, and became bigger, more demanding, and more complex. She soon had three employees, a large customer base and beautiful, spacious premises in a central location. The working days usually lasted long, and even then, she still took home files and procedures for the next day. To stay fit, but also for business reasons, she joined the local golf club, trained regularly with a professional and soon belonged to the top group of regional golfers. The work and exercise kept her fit and slim. She used her time at the golf club, usually Saturday afternoon or Sunday, for professional contacts and the initiation of new assignments. Apart from the perhaps 10 h at the golf club and the 70 working hours per week, there was hardly any time left for other things, especially social contacts. Closer, more intimate relationships were short-term and more likely to be of an incriminating, exploitative nature. Thus, she lived alone for almost 20 years.

The crisis began when she hired a new employee for the firm who turned out to be incompetent rather than an additional burden. Clients complained some switched to the competition. Dismissing the new employee required time, energy, and money. Just as the staff situation had been smoothed to some extent, the tax authority announced an audit of the accounts. This caused additional panic, because although the lawyer was a proven expert in her field, she was otherwise rather a "chaotic" person, little organized, little structured, at the same time not very capable of making decisions in administrative matters and rather a person who picked up and piled everything. During this phase, she gave up golf, slept badly, drank, and ate too much,

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which quickly led to a significant weight gain. She was unfocused, it was difficult for her to get involved in the many different cases and to decide quickly or to work through the requirements. She left cases lying around, delayed appointments and decisions, avoided contact with clients, let herself be denied on the phone, did not open or answer letters or e-mails, or did so with significant delay. There was an increase in complaints and conflicts with customers. One of these dissatisfied clients eventually sued her for an error or irregularity and filed an appeal with the Bar Association.

When I met this lawyer, she seemed agitated, exhausted, overwhelmed, could not get any rest, slept badly, did not go back to her office, dismissed all but one employee, greatly reduced her client base, stopped taking on new assignments, sublet two rooms in her practice, and is full of self-doubt and existential fears. There was a mountain of unopened mail and hundreds of unread or unanswered e-mails. The action before the court, especially the appeal to the Chamber, hangs over her like a sword of Damocles, without her having taken any action in this matter, without her having informed herself about it or without having used legal assistance herself.

Problem Areas: Fears, withdrawal, alcohol, and eating behavior, one-sided lifestyle, avoidance behavior, negative self-assessment, deficits in problem-solving and stress management.

Goals: Ability to work, building problem-solving skills, giving up avoidance, everyday structure, work-life balance, physical activation, mindfulness, building social contacts, correcting negative self-assessments, reducing demands.

With the SORKC model (see below), which is fundamental in behavior modification, the case study can be structured as follows:

Interventions: S-interventions (stimulus) involve stimulus control, everyday activities (social and positive activities) and exposure. R-interventions (reaction/behavior) are used to practice work behavior (postponement behavior), problem-solving, stress management (attentiveness, work-life balance), exercise and nutritional behavior. The O-interventions (organism) include cognitive methods (column protocols, schemes) of restructuring values, claims, self-evaluation. These interventions are supported by the life history classification and (learning psychological, cognitive) explanations. The C-interventions (Consequences) constantly play a central role in the form of social recognition, praise from the coach, self-reinforcement, and the targeted use of pleasant activities contingent on changing steps (R, S, O).

Definition

Behavioral modification is a term introduced in the 1960s for the application of psychological learning principles (responsive and operant learning) to change unwanted, disturbed, pathological behavior (Ullmann & Krasner, 1965). While the classical learning principles initially dominated the developed interventions (e.g., systematic desensitization, stimulus satiation, behavioral shaping, coin amplification, etc.), the repertoire was already expanded in the early 1970s by cognitive interventions (e.g., models, self-instruction, covert learning, cognitive therapy, etc.). Behavioral modification became cognitive behavior modification (Mahoney, 1974; Meichenbaum, 1977) and is largely congruent with modern behavior therapy (Hautzinger, 2011).

Behavioral modification is an intervention for a wide range of problems (occupational, social, interactional, emotional, motor, and cognitive). It begins with a systematic analysis of the life and learning history, the functional problem analysis of each of the current difficulties and from this, in cooperation with the persons concerned, derives the goals for intervention. To achieve the goals, it used a wide variety of interventions derived from the problem analysis and justified to achieve the intervention goal as planned. Today, these interventions include a wide range of techniques, strategies, and programs (Linden & Hautzinger, 2015), which are primarily rooted in psychological theories, but also in (neuro)biology, sociology, education and educational sciences and other related disciplines.

Basic Theories

The principle of *respondent learning (also classical conditioning) goes* back to the work of the physiologist Iwan Petrowitsch Pawlow (1849–1936). The theory states that a natural, usually innate, unconditional stimulus-response connection (e.g., electric shock pain) can be added to a previously neutral stimulus (e.g., certain room, certain person) as a new, conditional stimulus to the original reaction through experience (coupling, learning). John Watson (1878–1958), in particular, used the term "behaviorism" to make responsive learning accessible to the application. As Watson (1919, p. 9) put it: "Psychology, as the behaviorist sees it, is a purely objective branch of natural science. Their theoretical goal is the prediction and control of behavior." The sight of a person, the smell of a drink, a certain emotion or even many people, narrow spaces, darkness become conditioned stimuli for a physical (e.g., nausea, pain, racing heart), motor (e.g., escape), emotional (e.g., anger, hate, fear), cognitive (e.g., threat, helplessness) reaction by coupling with aversive experiences. Responsive learning is also known as S-R learning.

The research on *operant (also instrumental) conditioning goes* back to the work of Edward Thorndike (1874–1949) and Burrhus Frederick Skinner (1904–1988). For example, Thorndike's *Law of Effect* (Thorndike, 1933) states: "A behavior

whose consequences are satisfactory for the organism is repeated, while the frequency of a behavior with unpleasant or harmful consequences decreases."

Skinner and his work led to the specification that operant conditioning takes place by reinforcing the behavior and shaping the behavior by gradual approximation (Schwitzgebel & Kolb, 1974). Learning, therefore, changes the probability with which behavior occurs. Operative conditioning can therefore also be understood as S-R-C learning. The operant learning theory is a hedonistic theory according to which an organism strives to achieve what is pleasant and to avoid what is unpleasant.

The term *cognition* encompasses the processes of perceiving, recognizing, understanding, evaluating, judging, explaining, concluding, anticipating, and remembering (Neisser, 1976). Cognitive psychology deals with questions of how people structure their experiences, how they give them meaning by transforming stimuli into usable information. In the understanding of cognitive psychology, learning, and behavior is not to be understood as the passive formation of stimulus-response connections but as an active process. The learner interprets a situation in the light of what has already been acquired in the past. New information is fitted into a network (schemata) of existing knowledge, and the existing structures are reorganized. These cognitive considerations were first experimentally examined by Lazarus (1966) and by Bandura (1969) during the experience or processing of stress (stress) and during social and vicarious learning or self-control of behavior and then applied to phenomena like fear, anxiety, stress, anger, depression, etc.

In theory, Bandura (1977), with his theory of self-efficacy and Langer (1989), with her theory of mindfulness, have provided a framework that integrates the effects of different cognitive and behavioral interventions. Effects of cognitive interventions can be explained by the fact that they give clients a "feeling" of self-efficacy and influence, i.e., the "belief" that they have control and can achieve desired goals. However, this always requires behavior and action, i.e., experience, not just insight, experience and thinking. Environment, social interactions, cognition, behavior, and emotions constantly influence each other reciprocally (Bandura, 1977; Langer, 1989; Neisser, 1976). All cognitive interventions, therefore, consider stimuli and conditions coming from outside as well as the consequences of actions in the environment.

The basic elements of any learning, so that any analysis and modification, are:

drive (motivation), i.e., h. the pursuit of pleasure and the avoidance of displeasure
S = Signal, stimulus (stimulus, i.e., h. an indication of when, where, and how to react)
R = Response (motor, emotional, linguistic, cognitive behavior, models)
C = Consequence reward or punishment (also observed C, model effect)
O = Organism (i.e., enduring attitudes, personality, biological quantities, values)
K = Contingency, i.e., the relationship between R and C (i.e., reinforcement plans)

This results in the "behavioral equation" S-O-R-K-C (Kanfer & Philipps, 1970). The SORKC model is a simplified working model which aims to make the determinants of behavior transparent and from which starting points for interventions can

be derived. The SORKC model is the central component of functional problem diagnostics (behavioral analysis).

Behavior (R) includes motivational, physiological, somatic, endocrine, hormonal, emotional, various cognitive, motor, linguistic, non-linguistic, interactional processes. Behavior is therefore not a unit reduced only to observable motor behavior.

Learning and action are controlled by the following determinants:

Behavior (R) is deliberately controllable but mostly unconscious and automated.

Behavior (R) is controlled by preceding (S, O) and subsequent stimuli (K, C).

Expectations and attitudes (O), but also physical processes, drug influences and personality traits (e.g., optimism or neuroticism) promote or inhibit expressions of behavior.

Gaps or deficits in the behavioral repertoire (R) can be compensated by relearning with positive consequences (C+).

Consequences are pleasant (K/C +) or unpleasant (K/C −).

Pleasant, i.e., reinforcing quality is also created by the absence of unpleasant consequences (negative reinforcement).

New or changed behavior is created by positive or negative reinforcement and implemented in the repertoire of action.

Unpleasant consequences, i.e., punishing quality, are produced by direct or indirect punishment (withdrawal, loss of pleasantly experienced consequence).

Without reinforcement, a behavior occurs less frequently and less often (will be deleted).

Punishment temporarily suppresses behavior but does not create new behavior and lasting change.

Generalization is a typical process that can relate to preceding stimuli (S) and behavior (R).

Stimuli (stimulus conditions of a situation) are given a hint character by linking an expression of behavior with consequences (C), pointing to a later reward when the behavior is shown (S^D) or when the behavior is inhibited ($S\Delta$).

> With reference to the case study at the beginning of the chapter, letters, e-mails, calls can be understood as S^D for avoidance or withdrawal, which is negatively reinforced by the short-term absence of unpleasant consequences. Since there are no corresponding alternative behaviors (R), there are negative consequences in the long term (C−, e.g., overdraft fees from the tax office, loss of a client, accusations from acquaintances, etc.), which are additionally aversively charged by self-criticism (C−) and misjudgment. From this, but above all from biographical experiences, overtaxing, dysfunctional demands and negative attitudes (O) result, which have an effect across situations.

Interventions: Building Up or Reducing Behavior

Behaviors can be changed, broken down or built up in different ways, each time emphasizing different elements of the S-O-R-C behavioral chain. For the triggering situation (S), these are stimulus control, discrimination learning and generalization, for the organism variables (O), these are analysis of automatic thoughts, attitudes, schemata, expectations, for the behavior (R) itself it is practice (behavioral experiments), shaping and chaining of complex behavior patterns as well as prompting (assistance) and for the consequences (C) it is (differential) reinforcement or punishment.

S Interventions

Stimulus control (discrimination). Through experience, an organism learns to connect certain stimuli (cues) with behavioral expressions or the suppression (inhibition) of behavior. Thus, a tidy workplace can be a stimulus for defined work behavior. When a teacher enters the classroom, this is a stimulus for stop talking (be quiet) and the collection of work materials. Advertising or a visit to an inn signals appetite and triggers alcohol consumption. Personal appointments (time, daily schedule) become a signal for sports, social contacts, calls.

Generalization. Behavior, even entire chains of action, are shown in the most diverse situations and thus come under different trigger stimuli. More and more stimuli trigger a certain behavior. This can be used in behavior modification by training a desired behavior (e.g., socially oriented behavior, empathy, listening) under different stimulus conditions and finally showing it automatically.

O-Interventions

Various methodological approaches can be distinguished in the modification of *cognitive processes:* Thought control, self-instruction and cognitive rehearsal, cognitive analysis and restructuring, metacognitive interventions, mindfulness, acceptance.

In general, *cognitive restructuring* can be divided into five steps:

1. Discover (observe, perceive) cognitive processes: Observation (self-observation) of emotional or somatic state of mind (e.g., pain, fear, panic, depression, anger, etc.) and the cognitive processes involved (e.g., automatic thoughts, meanings, demands, worries), which can be functional and dysfunctional.
2. Recognizing how cognition influences feeling and acting in a controlling way: recognizing and accepting the connection between emotions, cognitions, and behavior. The effect of cognitive processes on emotional experience and somatic

well-being is particularly important for coaching. This is about clients accepting, based on their own observations, that the automatically, unconsciously running cognitions control the state of health, the complaints, and the pathological processes. This insight is experienced as a new strength ("empowering"), as it enables control over somatic and psychological complaints, experiences, emotions, and behavior to be gained.

3. Changed handling of cognitive automatisms: (a) review evidence: The identified distorted cognitions (automatic thoughts, rules, schemes, basic beliefs, self-instructions) are subjected to critical analysis. It is a matter of questioning dysfunctional cognitions, checking them, finding evidence for and against certain thoughts, finding, and formulating alternatives or more helpful, situationally appropriate, friendly thoughts (judgments, assessments, self-assessments, etc.). (b) acceptance and mindful behavior: Perceiving thoughts from a meta-position, paying mindful and calm attention, not avoiding but accepting, not wanting to change but allowing, whereby the thoughts dissolve, move on, disappear.

4. Training, practice, and learning phase: the new insights, the more helpful and functional thoughts, the attitude of acceptance and mindfulness must now be trained intensively and over a longer period under guidance. Only through the experience (learning) that the new strategies and approaches are helpful, emotional blockades and rumination, self-deprecation and impulsiveness are avoided, new processing patterns, memory contents and networks develop. In the process, there are always setbacks and the automatic appearance of old, dysfunctional patterns. This requires support and encouragement, adaptation, and joint practice.

5. Independent application and maintenance of the new strategies: The change of cognitive processes and the development of a changed attitude towards negative, spontaneously imposed thoughts takes time and requires a long-term, independent work. The old cognitive networks are deeply rooted and will be active for a long time to come. The new way of dealing with thoughts, changed, constructive, self-effective thinking must be trained, comparable to muscle and physical movement sequences, which are only automated through regular training and frequent use. Therefore, self-control and independent application are necessary.

Self-Instruction Training Actions are (co-)controlled by (automated, therefore not conscious) self-instructions. Often enough, the success or failure of our actions depends on the nature and content of our self-verbalizations. Behavioral changes undergo a sequence of mediation processes in which inner speech, cognitive structures, observable behavior, and the results thereof (consequences) influence each other. Self-verbalization (building and changing inner monologs) has been developed for a wide range of problem areas, e.g., for attention focusing and action control, impulse control and emotion regulation, aggression and anger control, stress management and stress vaccination, worry and rumination control, fear management (for social insecurities, fears, fear reactions).

Meichenbaum (1977) points out the following principles for a self-instruction training:

Self-Monitoring and Problem Analysis. In the first step of the change process, clients become observers of their own behavior. Through increased awareness and focused attention, they monitor thoughts, feelings, physical reactions, and behavior. Recognition of unfavorable self-referential attitudes and self-instructions.

Replace Incompatible Thoughts with More Helpful Instructions. Replace self-damaging, dysfunctional thoughts with more constructive self-instruction. To the extent that self-observation focuses on maladaptive behavior and related cognitive processes, these are questioned, and gradually more favorable alternatives (O, R) are developed.

Training of Functional Self-Instructions. After the development of new forms of coping, constructive self-instructions to control (changed) actions, these are practiced and trained in everyday life. Social reinforcement and self-reinforcement (C) stabilize the new behavior.

R Interventions

Behavioral exercises are particularly suitable for building new behavior, overcoming behavioral deficits, building complex chains of action, but also for changing hidden processes (cognitions, emotions, self-instruction). The central methods are behavioral tests and role plays. Complex actions can be broken up and practiced in stages. Through the description of situations, roles, and behavioral processes, an attempt is made to break down the human behavioral stream into units and thus make it changeable (learnable, trainable).

The training or role plays usually have *seven steps* or sections (Hautzinger, 2015):

1. Problem description, elaboration of a playable situation.
2. Determination of a playable situation with one or more possibilities or alternatives for action, the definition of the roles and behavior of the role-play participants, precise planning of the procedure.
3. Playing, behavioral test, carrying out the exercise, assistance, video/tape recording.
4. Constructive feedback, evaluation of the tape recording, differential amplification, suggestions for improvement.
5. Playing again, repeating, testing new behavior based on the feedback and suggestions.
6. Renewed feedback, reinforcement of progress, differential reinforcement towards target behavior.
7. Transfer and transfer into everyday life, reality.

Social *competence training* aims to enable a person to gain minimum negative experiences and maximum positive experiences in interaction with other people through the practice of skillful interpersonal skills (Ullrich & Ullrich de Muynck, 2015).

The goals of social competence training are: (a) to allow themselves to have their own claims, (b) to dare to express their own claims, (c) to have the ability to enforce them in a socially appropriate manner. Accordingly, social competence has the following aspects: Saying no and contradiction, rejecting temptations, reacting to criticism, demanding changes in disruptive behavior, preventing interruptions in the conversation, apologizing, admitting weaknesses, ending unwanted contacts and arranging desired ones, accepting and making compliments, starting, maintaining, and ending conversations.

The aim of *communication training is to enable* social partners, through the practice of specific speaking and listening skills, to communicate openly, receptively, constructively, and in congruence with their feelings and non-verbal behavior (Hahlweg et al., 2015).

Speaking skills are: (a) Ego-use and self-opening—each partner should speak of their own thoughts, feelings, needs, and desires; (b) concrete situations—partners should learn to describe their messages to the listener using concrete situations and specific behavior; (c) concrete behavior—speaker should not only refer to a concrete situation but also describe the partner's behavior as concretely as possible; (d) sticking to the topic—partners should speak from the here and now. It is not about "washing old laundry," but about changing the present and the future.

Listening skills are: (a) Recording Listening—listener should show speaker through non-verbal behavior that they are interested, attentive, and listening to what is being said; (b) Summing up—partners should learn to summarize the speaker's remarks as listeners; (c) Open Questions—if, in the course of the remarks, the listener feels that they do not understand correctly or is only expressing feelings, wishes, and opinions indirectly, specific feelings should be asked, or an offer should be made with several feelings; (d) Give positive feedback—interlocutors should not be afraid to praise each other for open and understandable expressions; (e) Give feedback on their own feelings. If the speaker's remarks are emotionally touching, for example, making you angry or disappointing, listeners should report back these feelings.

Proble-Solving Training Problem-solving is an intervention that enables clients to react independently to current, but above all to future difficulties, obstacles, problems, and to deal with them successfully. In principle, concepts of problem-solving training in psychotherapy or coaching do not differ structurally from problem-solving in completely different areas (technology, science) (Nezu et al., 2013).

Problem-solving usually consists of nine steps or sections:

1. Step: Information and preparation
2. Step: Problem description
3. Step: Problem analysis
4. Step: Target analysis
5. Step: Generation (brainstorming) of solutions (without evaluation)
6. Step: Feasibility check and change planning
7. Step: Trying out the solution, trial treatment

8. Step: Evaluation of the trial treatment
9. Step: Transfer planning, independent application in everyday life

C, K Interventions

Reinforcement (differential, intermittent) involves the targeted rewarding of appropriate, desirable behavior and non-reinforcement of inappropriate, destructive behavior. Appearing in the office, answering a call is reinforced socially or with points, while breaks, leaving tasks unattended is not reinforced or commented on. Initially, continuous contingent reinforcement is important. During and to stabilize new behavior, occasional (intermittent) reinforcement is appropriate. Correspondingly, a variable reinforcement plan (K) creates deletion-resistant behavior.

Behavioral shaping means the approach to a target behavior according to the principle of small steps. For example, it is usually easier to represent one's own interests in the private sphere than at work, so that when training social skills, one first addresses this aspect in the private or protected environment.

Behavioral chaining. Starting from behavioral elements close to the amplifier, the participants practice behavioral elements that precede and follow the amplifier. When building up work behavior and overcoming avoidance (see the introductory case study), it is too much to ask to do all the work and tasks at once and in the right order. You, therefore, start with manageable subsets and simple work. Only when these are mastered to satisfaction and experienced in a positive way can the individual activities be put into a sequence or chain of action.

Prompting means that assistance is given to facilitate the desired behavior. A prompting would be, for example, to provide the lawyer in the case study with an assistant for the first few days or for certain tasks. It is important that this assistance is reduced again in time.

Deletion/extinction. Behavior becomes rarer if the positive consequences (e.g., attention, affection) that have been common up to now fail to materialize or if stimuli with multiple causes are experienced without being linked to the unconditional reactions. Deletion is a slow process, which is interrupted or even prevented by re-amplification.

Punishment. If the behavior is followed by aversive consequences, the behavior is suppressed, creating space for alternative, positively reinforced behavior. However, the punishing person should be involved in the (positive) learning process.

Token Economy

Token economy is a structured operant method for behavior modification. It systematically applies the principles of reinforcing (rewarding and punishing) behavior

to make desirable behavior more likely and reduce undesirable behavior. It, therefore, uses the consequences (C) and their contingencies (K) to control behavior. Tokens or coupons (vouchers or money) are used as flexibly applicable amplifiers, which in turn can usually be exchanged for reinforcing activities (e.g., output, leisure, contact). The aim is to control behavior by amplifiers, moving as quickly as possible from external control to self-control. In addition, the aim is to replace external reinforcement as quickly as possible by the new behavior itself having an intrinsically reinforcing effect and being socially reinforced. Areas of application of this C-intervention are primarily education, school, prison, addiction treatment, but also work behavior, team, and group interaction. In coaching, however, this method is hardly applicable. But keep in mind, being paid (€, $, £) for a certain action is "token economy!"

Implications for Coaching

If one understands coaching as guidance for problem diagnosis and, if necessary, for attitude and behavior change, then all the interventions presented here are also relevant in this practical framework. Successful coaching is based on an appropriate problem and behavior analysis (SORKC model), on a concrete target agreement and an intervention plan that convinces the client. Depending on the problem situation, S-, O-, R-, and C-interventions can be used. Often a detailed, concrete problem analysis (including a motivation clarification) is already sufficient to activate the client's existing resources and to modify their behavior independently. Where guidance and assistance are needed, a few but clearly structured sessions over a limited period of time are usually sufficient to achieve a certain goal.

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Brain-Focused Coaching

Lyra Puspa

Evidence-based coaching has developed as a discipline that integrates the use of the best available knowledge with professional wisdom or expertise (Stober et al., 2006; Grant, 2016). However, evidence-based coaching is mainly based on questionnaires and behavior observation methods (see chapter: Work Place Coaching Research). In exploring our best available knowledge of evidence, neuroscience emerges to be a highly potential line of scientific evidence that may underpin the coaching practice. Imagine what evidence-based coaching looks like when we can observe and demystify the brain activities and brain pattern changes that are induced during and post-coaching.

Despite the advance of neuroimaging techniques, the role of the neuroscience perspective in evidence-based coaching seems to be overlooked. The proponents of neuroscience evidence in coaching basically try to link the neuroimaging findings in non-coaching clinical setting with coaching principles (Dias et al., 2015) without showing any empirical evidence on how coaching actually impacts the brain. The opponents of neuroscience-based coaching argued that the value of neuroscience seems to be harnessed in a more commercial way as a "proof" that coaching works, instead of contributing unique coach-specific theories and methodologies as a scientific foundation for coaching (Grant, 2015, 2016).

This chapter is intended to open up the possibilities to embrace the neuroscience approach in coaching. Based on recent groundbreaking findings in coaching research using neuroimaging techniques, the aim of this chapter is to enrich the scientific evidence of evidence-based coaching by offering a framework as an application of neuroscience principles in coaching practice which I refer to as brain-focused coaching.

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What Is Brain-Focused Coaching?

Brain-focused approach in coaching intends to answer two questions: (1) what happens in the brain during a coaching conversation, and (2) what kind of changes in the brain that drives behavior change to attain the goals. Hence, brain-focused coaching goes beyond the application of empirical findings from neuroscience to the field of coaching. Its focus is to induce a significant change in the brain that is directly translated to behavior change or increased performance.

The idea is derived from the brain's ability to change itself, which is called neuroplasticity. The markers of neuroplasticity consist of three changes: (1) electrophysiological function, (2) neurochemical balance, and (3) anatomical structure (Cramer et al., 2011; Sidal, 2013). These changes are the result of brain responses to intrinsic or extrinsic stimuli. Scientific evidence found that behavior change is closely associated with anatomical changes of the brain, as revealed in studies on meditation practice (Fox et al., 2014), occupational expertise (Wu et al., 2020), and behavioral improvement of children with obesity (Augustijn et al., 2018). Another line of studies also demonstrated that induced neuroplasticity through non-invasive neurostimulation had significant effects on behavior change by altering relevant brain circuitry through tactile stimulation and drug treatment in animal studies (Kolb et al., 2003) as well as electrical brain stimulation in the reduction of craving behavior of humans (Jansen et al., 2013). These lines of neuroscience evidence evoke intriguing questions about whether coaching can be treated as a non-invasive brain stimulation to induce relevant brain alteration that manifests in desired behavioral change and goal achievement.

In brain-focused coaching perspective, a serial of powerful coaching questions to evoke awareness may serve as external non-invasive stimuli to deliberately trigger certain brain processes and activities that directly induce self-directed functional, chemical, or structural change in the brain. Considering the three levels of brain changes, the term "Brain-Focused Coaching" is coined here to refer to: "any coaching framework, methodology, or technique that is constructed to deliberately harness, optimize, or alter specific brain patterns in attempt to foster behavior change or goal attainment by inducing a significant empirical effect on relevant functional, chemical, or structural change in the brain." According to this definition, a particular coaching framework, technique, theory, or methodology can be considered as a brain-focused coaching approach when it follows two unique characteristics.

First, it is deliberately intended to induce a specific impact on the brain. As coaching engages thinking, feeling, and decision-making process of human beings, all coaching involves the brain. However, not every coaching approach is aimed to stimulate or change specific brain patterns in association with a particular behavior or human condition that needs to be addressed. Brain-focused coaching refers to coaching frameworks or methodologies that are designed based on empirical findings in neuroscience and intentionally aimed to induce change in the brain functions that are associated with behavior change or goal attainment.

Second, it involves scientific investigation using empirical neuroscience evidence. Linking a coaching technique or methodology to some popular principles of how the brain works cannot provide a plausible claim that such techniques or methodology will induce the significant neurobiological effect. A brain-focused coaching technique or methodology should then be examined using neuroimaging techniques that can validate its effect on the human brain and its direct correlation with behavior change and goal attainment in nonclinical populations.

The latest innovation of various neuroimaging devices and methodologies enables the recording and measurement of real-time brain signals simultaneously during a coaching session as well as examine the brain activation induced by coaching. A pre- and post-fMRI study (Jack et al., 2013) that measured the impact of two different approaches of coaching-style interview on the brain opened up the possibilities of putting neuroscience perspectives as a line of evidence in coaching. The use of qEEG technique to unfold the brain activities during an in vivo coaching session (Puspa et al., 2018, 2019) expanded the potentials of exploring how coaching can actually induce a significant and observable impact on the human brain and behavior.

The following part of this chapter aims to propose a framework based on recent neuroscientific evidence of four critical aspects of sustained behavior change. Thenceforth, a working model of brain-focused coaching—the CARE model—will be introduced to address those four aspects, along with its empirical evidence from recent neuro-behavior studies.

Brain-Focused Aspects of Sustained Change

Recent meta-analyses on the effects of coaching revealed that coaching is an effective intervention to facilitate behavior change and goal attainment at both individual level and organizational context (Theeboom et al., 2013; Jones et al., 2015; Sonesh et al., 2015). Yet, it is hard to create a lasting change and sustained performance. From the perspective of behavioral neuroscience, Berkman (2018) highlighted the neural mechanisms of cognitive and motivational dimensions that give rise to human behaviors in achieving goals. The cognitive dimension, which he refers to as the "way," is associated with the role of executive functions in the prefrontal cortex (PFC) in having the skills, capacities, and knowledge to engage in a particular behavior. The motivational dimension that he refers to as the 'will', is associated with the role of subcortical neural systems in relation to the desire to engage in the particular behavior. Even though Berkman's dual-dimensional framework is useful to understand types of behaviors based on cognitive and affective aspects, it did not capture the neural mechanisms that underlie the integrated process of change.

A useful framework to understand the process of behavioral change and goal attainment in brain-focused coaching is the Transtheoretical Model of Behavior Change (TTM). The TTM treats behavior change as a dynamic process that is

characterized by a series of "readiness to change" stages (Prochaska, 2008). According to the TTM framework, individuals attempting to change their behavior move through six stages: pre-contemplation (no intention to change), contemplation (having a goal and intention to change), preparation (developing an action plan to change), action (taking adequate actions to implement a new behavior), maintenance (working to prevent relapse), and termination (establishing a new automatic habit). In line with a meta-analytic evidence of TTM that revealed a robust change of behavior during the transition from pre-contemplation to contemplation and preparation to action (Marshall & Biddle, 2001), brain-focused coaching may contribute an important role in increasing an individual's readiness to change during the contemplation and preparation stages by stimulating relevant brain activities. However, Grant (2012) also suggests the role of a coach to raise awareness of change in the pre-contemplation stage and support self-regulation cycle through monitoring and evaluation in the maintenance stage.

According to the TTM framework of readiness to change, there are four aspects of change that need to be addressed in brain-focused coaching. First, the contemplation stage of TTM indicates that an individual should think consciously about a specific goal to attain, which I refer to as the "direction" aspect of change. Second, the preparation stage of the TTM suggests that an action plan should be developed, which I refer to as the 'decision' aspect of change. These two aspects of change are aligned with the concept of goal-focused coaching (Grant, 2012) that involves goal-setting and the action-planning process.

Although the purpose of the goal is as the source of motivation (Grant, 2012), having a goal does not necessarily ensure the existence of a high-level motivation and volition to change or achieve the desired goal. The TTM framework also implies the role of enhanced motivation to move an individual through all stages. Thus, the third aspect of change is related to strengthen the motivation to change, which I refer to as the "drive" aspect. Finally, to facilitate lasting behavior change, the maintenance stage of the TTM framework indicates that volition is needed to prevent relapse (Prochaska, 2008) through self-regulation (Grant, 2012), which I refer to as the "determination" aspect of change. The following part is an attempt to explain the neural mechanisms behind the four aspects of behavior change and goal attainment based on evidence from behavioral neuroscience.

Direction: The Goal Clarification of Change

Since coaching is very often a goal-focused activity, the goal-setting process is a fundamental part in coaching (Grant, 2012). Goals are defined as mental representations of desired future states (Austin & Vancouver, 1996). The selection and setting of a goal are based on internal motivation and external demands. The definition of a goal by the client serves as the direction of possible changes, which might lead to the goal. Cognitive neuroscience studies about goal-directed behavior

have mostly focused on two relevant neural mechanisms: executive functions and episodic systems.

The first mechanism, the executive functions, refers to the higher level cognitive functions of the brain. It includes cognitive processes and mental skills that help a person to clarify and monitor their goals, such as attention, inhibitory control, working memory, and task switching (Staminova & Levine, 2018). Brain's ability to manage attention plays a significant role in goal-setting. There are two kinds of attention: (1) passive, effortless, nonvoluntary attention that has been termed "bottom-up," and (2) active, effortful, voluntary attention that has been termed "top-down" (Bisley & Goldberg, 2010). Executive function engages a top-down mental process that occupies an individual's conscious attention. In coaching, setting a well-defined goal or selecting a prioritized goal upon other conflicting goals requires mental efforts, which are not autopilot processes like breathing or blinking. Goal-setting processes during a coaching conversation occur within awareness and require conscious attention of the client.

An extensive line of neuroscience evidence showed that the prefrontal cortex (PFC) in particular plays a critical role in voluntary attentional control. However, the PFC was highlighted in goal processing (Stawarczyk & D'Argembeau, 2015), inward-directed attention (Johnson et al., 2006), and top-down processing of novel goals (Miller & Cohen, 2001). Research also showed that the lateral PFC lesion resulted in an impairment of attentional switch (Rossi et al., 2009); while shifting attention focus to promotion goals—the type of goals which an individual is aspired to pursue—was associated with left orbital PFC activation (Eddington et al., 2007).

The second mechanism that relates to defining the expected goal is an episodic system. The episodic system is a human capacity to build a mental representation of personal experience. It consists of two subsystems: (1) episodic memory that is associated with the ability to remember a past experience, and (2) episodic foresight, which refers to the ability to imagine or simulate future events. Recent findings in neuroscience revealed a common "core" network in the brain—commonly referred to as "the default network"—that underlies both remembering the past and imagining the future (Buckner & Carrol, 2007; see chapter: Insight Through Coaching). Neuroimaging studies observed brain activation in medial temporal and frontal cortices, posterior cingulate, retrosplenial cortex, as well as lateral parietal and temporal regions (Schachter et al., 2012) when people remember the past and imagine the future.

The overlapping brain activity that was observed when people remembered past events and simulating future events was the foundation of the human ability to project oneself into the past, present, and future—which is referred to as "mental time travel" (Suddendorf & Corballis, 2007). When a client is facilitated to define an expected goal, the coach basically harnesses the client's mental time travel abilities and stimulates his or her brain network of episodic foresight to construct a mental representation of future events. It is useful to notice that facilitating a client to construct a vivid imagination of future goals using comprehensive elements (i.e., person, place, scenario, and emotion) will engage more extensive brain activation (Schachter et al., 2017). Recent findings revealed the role of the hippocampus in

simulating novel future events (i.e., imagining a new goal) that has not been previously imagined. Moreover, the emotional valence of the simulated future events links to different brain regions, where negative future events relate with the thalamus and the positive events is associated with the increased activity in the orbitofrontal cortex (OFC).

Decision: The Action Plan to Change

The second aspect of change and goal attainment is to create an action plan to undertake the change process and achieve the expected goal. Neuroscience studies have explored the decision-making process of humans from two perspectives: (1) the neural mechanisms on making a choice between alternative options and (2) the neural network that underlies the process of creating a plan to achieve a future goal.

The first perspective of decision-making refers to human's ability to evaluate choice options and choose between those competing options based on the relative value of their potential outcomes. Studies found that the frontal lobe and dopaminergic reward network involves in the process of generating options, evaluating options, and making a choice among the available options (Fellows, 2004). Orbitofrontal cortex (OFC) is associated with the generation, evaluation, and comparison between pleasant (reward or benefit) and unpleasant (punishment or risk) consequences of the options (Balleine, 2007; Volz & Von Cramon, 2009). Meanwhile, key dopaminergic regions (i.e., striatum and ventral tegmental area) and their targeted region (e.g., ventromedial PFC) play a critical role in the prediction or expectation of reward (Smith & Huettel, 2010). It means that decision-making process is closely related to subjective perception of future outcomes and motivation towards the perceived rewarding outcome.

In general, optimum choice making involves the activation of ventromedial PFC (vmPFC) and OFC that indicates the crucial supporting role of emotion in decision-making process (Bossaerts, 2009). Studies on patients with frontal lobe damage demonstrated that patients with OFC and vmPFC damage persistently more often chose the risky option. Such risky decision is argued due to impairment of embodied emotional anticipation towards the options—which refers to "somatic marker" hypothesis coined by Antonio Damasio (Fellows, 2004; Bossaerts, 2009). The somatic marker mechanism contributes to the subjective determination of specific options as either pleasant or unpleasant and supports the decision-making of choosing the preferred one between those options. The decision to choose between small, immediate rewards and larger, delayed rewards also involves the activation of OFC (Fellows, 2004).

The second perspective of decision-making refers to the scenario planning of future actions that need to be implemented to obtain the desired goal. Since creating plans is also a goal-directed behavior as goal-setting is, hence both strategic and tactical planning involves episodic foresight—a branch of episodic system that is associated with prospective, future thinking (McKiernan, 2016). Despite the

abundant evidence regarding the involvement of a common core network that is activated during remembering the past and imagining the future (Buckner and Carrol, 2007; Schachter et al., 2012), studies also found that future scenario simulation activates dorsolateral PFC (dlPFC), anterior inferior parietal lobe, and posterior cingulate (Gerlach et al., 2014).

Drive: The Motivational Factors of Change

Motivation studies tend to focus on advancing understanding of specific motivation. Baumeister (2015) inquired about the possibility of generating a general theory of motivation by highlighting the central role of motivation as the driver of cognition, action, and emotion. Defining motivation simply as wanting some change, Baumeister argued a distinction between the "drive" which refers to broad, dispositional tendencies and the "impulse" which refers to a instantiated, contextualized (i.e. here and now) form of desire. The term "drive" as the third aspect of change in brain-focused coaching is aligned with Baumeister's broad definition of drive, which is not only limited to physiological needs (food, safety, and sex) but also includes the desire to be liked and respected, the desire for understanding and meaning, and other complex form of motivation.

Using the neurological and behavioral evidence of a SEEKING system, Wright and Panskepp (2012) also highlighted the concordance of motivation with a drive and argued that the use of the term "drive" in the physiological homeostasis sense might not reflect the true nature of how motivation operates in the brain. In proposing an evolutionary framework of motivation, Wright and Panskepp (2012) provide neuropsychological evidence from animal, Parkinson's, and addiction, and depression studies that SEEKING behavior couples with motivational drives. The motivational drives consist of three levels: (1) the primary level of instinctual drives (e.g., food, water, and sex); (2) the secondary level of learned incentives (e.g., money rewards and praise); and (3) the tertiary level of higher cognitive process (e.g., goals, autonomy, and meaning).

Affective and behavioral neuroscience studies have revealed the neural underpinnings of three major components of human motivation that consist of the process, direction, and source of motivation.

1. *The Process of Motivation*

Motivation studies in animal's reward-seeking behavior and human's addiction revealed that there are two separate yet interconnected systems of motivation in the brain: "wanting" and "liking" (Berridge, 2009; Robinson et al., 2015). "Wanting" (with quotation marks) refers to visceral feeling of desire to obtain a reward that mostly happens unconsciously. It differs from the ordinary term wanting (without quotation marks), which refers to the conscious, goal-oriented desire. "Liking" (with quotation marks) is essentially the subcortical process of hedonic pleasure in the

brain during reward consumption, which differs from the subjective experience of conscious pleasure.

"Wanting" mechanisms are generated by subcortical brain circuits, especially a circuit called the mesolimbic dopamine pathway, which is stimulated by dopamine and opioid activation. Meanwhile, hedonic "liking" is generated by more restricted hedonic hotspots that involves opioid stimulation but not dopamine stimulation. The hedonic hotspots are located within the limbic structure that consists of the nucleus accumbens, ventral pallidum, and brainstem parabrachial nucleus. Thus, brain manipulation that causes "liking" almost always causes "wanting," too; but one can experience the feeling of "wanting" without experience the hedonic pleasure of "liking" as revealed in addiction studies (Berridge, 2009).

Unconscious "wanting," which is called incentive salience, is a cue-triggered motivational reaction that is mediated by subcortical brain mechanisms that trigger intense motivation to obtain a cued reward without clear cognition of the cue. A subliminal yet strong desire of incentive salience was mostly revealed in the studies of behavioral conditioning, craving, or addiction. Major neural correlates of implicit "wanting" mechanisms are striatum, nucleus accumbens, amygdalae, ventral tegmental area (VTA), and ventral pallidum (Berridge, 2009). The implicit, visceral nature of "wanting" is aligned with the definition of "impulse" in Baumeister's general theory of motivation.

Since the nature of coaching engages a conscious goal-focused conversation, brain-focused coaching aims to stimulate motivation in the form of the conscious, goal-oriented wanting, which behavioral neuroscientists refer to as cognitive desires (Berridge, 2009; Robinson et al., 2015; Pool et al., 2016). A systematic review of the wanting and/or liking mechanism in humans (Pool et al., 2016) argued that human's cognitive desires rely on the expected pleasantness of the reward, which is built based on past "liking" experiences. The mental process consists of episodic memory to remember the past hedonic experience and the use of episodic foresight to predict or anticipate a similar hedonic sensation in the future. Studies also showed that dopaminergic mechanisms involve both in the experience of novel reward and in the "wanting" process to anticipate the learned reward (Schultz et al. 1997). These serials of evidence imply that expecting a desired goal based on past pleasant memories will motivate people to change due to simultaneous cognitive "wanting" and "liking" mechanisms.

2. The Direction of Motivation

Neuroscience evidence in frontal asymmetry research revealed the dual direction of motivation: to go toward (approach) or to go away from (avoid) something. The emergence of approach or avoidance motivation in the presence of stimuli is associated with asymmetric activities between the left and right frontal cortex. The research found that greater left frontal activation relates to approach motivation, while greater activity in the right frontal cortex relates with avoidance motivation (Harmon-Jones & Gable, 2017).

Motivational direction is known to be interconnected with the neural mechanisms that relate to affective valence and self-regulation. Studies showed that greater left

frontal cortical activity was associated with a more behavioral approach which relates both to positive affect in reward anticipation and greater effort in the pursuit of high-reward that needs high effort (Hughes et al., 2015). Even though evidence found that action-oriented positive effect towards appetitive stimuli generally caused greater activity in the left frontal cortex, greater left frontal cortical activation during a resting state was also associated with negative affect (i.e., anger), aggression, and impulsivity (Harmon-Jones & Gable, 2017). On the contrary, right frontal cortex mediates avoidance motivation and withdrawal behavior which generally relates with in-action-oriented negative affect (i.e., fear and sadness). While much less research has examined the relationship of relatively greater right frontal activity and motivational avoidance process, and studies discovered that greater activation in the right frontal cortex was found in the case of depression and anxiety (Thibodeau et al., 2006).

A line of evidence (Harmon-Jones & Gable, 2017) also found that damage to or deactivation of the left frontal region leads to depressive symptoms. The link between frontal asymmetry and motivational direction seems to be mediated by dopaminergic and corticoid mechanisms. For decades, cortisol has been used as an objective biomarker of stress monitoring. Studies revealed that relative right frontal activity was highest during fall morning (Magnusson, 2000) when the cortisol levels are higher (King et al., 2000). Meanwhile, research also showed that striatal dopamine asymmetry is linked with approach behavior towards positive incentive motivation (Tomer et al., 2008) and dopaminergic signaling pathway with anger trait (Reuter et al., 2009). This evidence implies the link between approach motivation and left frontal activation with dopaminergic "wanting'" mechanisms.

3. *The Type of Motivation*

Motivation to engage in a particular behavior can either be driven by internal desires (i.e., interest or task enjoyment) or external incentives (i.e., money or social recognition). The first type of motivation is referred to as intrinsic motivation, while the latter is called extrinsic motivation (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Most of the neuroscience studies examined the neural mechanisms underlying human or animal motivation to obtain external rewards, which is associated with extrinsic motivation.

Extrinsic motivation directs behavior to pursue an expected outcome that is separable from the activity itself. The extrinsic approach of behavior intervention was mainly applied in controlled behavior reinforcement to stimulate approach motivation towards external rewards and withdrawal motivation to avoid external punishment. Studies found that extrinsic motivation was positively correlated to neural activity increase in the anterior cingulate cortex (ACC), amygdala, and putamen (Linke et al., 2010). Levels of activity in putamen—which is strongly linked to reward magnitude, expectation, and prediction—was also revealed to be a biological marker of extrinsic motivational intensity (Mizuno et al., 2008). Extensive evidence demonstrated the functional role of the striatum (e.g., the nucleus accumbens, caudate, and putamen) in extrinsic motivation, since the pursuit of external rewards activates dopamine neurons in the striatum (Berridge, 2009; Lee, 2017).

Intrinsic motivation refers to human's innate propensity to seek out novelty and challenges, to extend and exercise one's capacity, to explore, as well as to learn and foster personal growth (Deci & Ryan, 2000). People who are intrinsically motivated tend to seek and conquer challenges to experience a sense of competence, and engage in an activity because they find it interesting and inherently satisfying. Experimental and field research guided by self-determination theory (SDT; Ryan & Deci, 2017) discovered the role of intrinsic motivation in learning, personal development, performance, creativity, and psychological well-being.

Dopamine is also considered as the key neural substrate of intrinsic motivation, which is related to "wanting" and 'seeking' behavior (Di Domenico & Ryan, 2017). The neural mechanisms of reward processing seem to play an important role in human motivation regardless of whether the reward being pursued is intrinsic or extrinsic. However, a systematic review (Ng, 2018) revealed the involvement of a particular cortical-subcortical network that underlies intrinsic motivation. It was associated with enhanced stimulus-preceding negativity (SPN) and anterior insular cortex (AIC) that are associated with engagement and enjoyment; ACC that engages in error detection and behavioral adaptation; medial and lateral frontal cortex, which is the key correlate of cognitive control; and ventral striatum that is associated with the intrinsic value of an action and reward processing. Among the aforementioned correlates, Lee (2017) emphasized the functional role of the insular cortex—which is well known for emotional processing, intrinsic satisfaction, and self-conscious-ness—as the core neural basis of intrinsic motivation.

Determination: The Volition Aspect of Change

Facilitation of self-regulatory skills is very important in coaching (Grant, 2012) to empower the client in sustaining the change. The ability to persist and overcome the temptation to relapse time to time enable people to manage successful sustained change and attain long-term goal. However, relapse is common, and adversity is inevitable in the process of behavior change and goal pursuit. Change and growth must be supported with enhanced volition and self-regulation skills to overcome the temptation to quit during the journey. An empirical investigation of behavior changes, goal attainment, and achievement emphasized the ability to persevere through challenges and adversity to achieve a set of goals. Studies found that individuals who have strong commitment and tenacity across time span—despite the failure, hardship, and delayed rewards in progress—showed high-quality per-formance, sustained behavior change, and well-being (Deci et al., 2017; Duckworth et al., 2007).

The term "determination" in this brain-focused coaching framework refers to the ability and capacity to persevere in the face of temptation during the process towards expected change and growth. Mounting evidence in neuroscience revealed three facets of human temptation that may hinder sustained change and success, which I refer to as cue-triggered desire, the resistance of old habit, and the temptation of

immediate rewards. The aforementioned facets of human temptation to quit the process of behavior change and goal attainment are associated with different underlying neural mechanisms. Intriguingly, studies found that basal ganglia—a group of deep brain nuclei that consists of the striatum and the subthalamic nucleus—plays a significant role in the neural mechanisms that underlie all facets of temptation.

(a) *Cue-Triggered Desire*

Motivation, in essence, refers to any sort of general drive or tendency to do something. Some drives are unconsciously triggered by learned cues, which is called incentive salience or cue-triggered desire—in contrast to cognitive desire that is more goal-directed (Berridge, 2009). The unconsciously cue-triggered trait of incentive salience makes it difficult to resist. As in the aforementioned explanation of incentive salience, the dopaminergic mesolimbic pathway is the underlying neural mechanism.

Studies in human's addiction (Berridge, 2009; Robinson et al., 2015) showed that incentive salience is stimulated by a learned cue even in the absence "liking" neither the cue nor the outcome. Even one can have a strong desire towards the cue itself when the presence of the cue stimulates the dopamine release. The neural mechanisms explain why an individual with a clear goal and plan can still relapse from time to time in the face of irrational desire. Studies revealed that the ventral striatum plays an important role in stimulus-reward associations and evoking cue-triggered irrational desire (O'Doherty et al., 2004; Berridge, 2009; Smith et al., 2011). One of the studies found that increased activity in the ventral pallidum (VP) when human and animal were presented by cues for sensory rewards, while dopaminergic stimulation in the nucleus accumbens (NAcc) enhanced neuronal firing signal of incentive salience (Smith et al., 2011). The cue-related activity in the NAcc was also associated with a greater likelihood of giving in to daily temptation (Lopez et al., 2004).

On the other hand, the frontal-insular cortex is known to be associated with impulse control and cue-related response inhibition. Studies demonstrated that the neural mechanisms of self-control over cue-triggered desire involve increased activities in the ventrolateral prefrontal cortex (vlPFC; e.g., inferior frontal gyrus and Broca's area) that may reflect the generation of internal speech during the inhibitory attempt of food-craving and sexual arousal (Beauregard et al., 2001; Lopez et al., 2014), as well as activation of the orbitofrontal cortex (OFC), the lateral regions of PFC, and insula that represents the role of cognitive control to inhibit the impulsivity (Hinvest et al., 2011; Johnson et al., 2019). Brain structural research supports these findings (Wang et al., 2017) by demonstrating that gray matter (GM) volume in the insula was negatively correlated with sensation-seeking behavior and negative urgency—which refers to the tendency to act rashly in the face of intense negative emotion.

(b) *Resistance of Old Habit*

Much of our daily behavior is habitual, which we do repetitively, almost without thinking (see chapter: Motivation, Volition, and Implementation). By automatizing behavior into daily routines, habits allow for optimum allocation of our limited

cognitive capacities and allowing our attention to be focused elsewhere. People are often hard to change habitual behavior because habits provide a substantial advantage of cognitive savings. The research found that the strength of a habit is determined by the degree of automatization (Jager, 2003). The more automated the behavior is, the stronger the habit. The stronger the habit, the less likely it changes. Once a habit is formed, new information is not taken when performing the behavior. Whereas habit formation is basically a process to enable optimal behavior in the face of prevailing circumstances, one will persist to the old habit despite any change of the circumstances. The resistance to change may continue to persist even in the presence of negative outcomes of performing the existing habit that hinder the attainment of one's long-term goal.

Habits are learned by the association between the stimulus and its response through instrumental learning, independent of reward or outcome (Smith & Graybiel, 2016; Seger, 2018). Mounting evidence suggests that SR habits depend on basal ganglia-based subcircuitry (e.g., the dorsal striatum and substantia nigra) and its related cortical brain structures, particularly the infralimbic cortex (O'Doherty et al., 2004; Graybiel, 2008; Smith & Graybiel, 2016; Seger, 2018). Neuroscience studies found that different parts of the striatum in basal ganglia involve in the distinction between goal-directed behavior, habitual learning, and reward processing. The dorsolateral striatum (e.g., posterior putamen) is involved in habit learning; the dorsomedial striatum (e.g., anterior caudate) is associated with goal-directed learning; and ventral striatum (e.g., NAcc) underlies motivational reward processing (Seger & Spiering, 2011; Seger, 2018). Studies also showed that chronic stress shifts organisms from goal-directed behavior to habitual mechanisms and is associated with increased connectivity between amygdala and putamen (Seger, 2018).

The commonly used human habit learning task is a stimulus-response-outcome design that leads to action-outcome (AO) behavior. Research showed that overtraining of behavior could shift AO behavior into SR habit without conscious awareness (Smith & Graybiel, 2016). The closer the reinforcement follows after performing the behavior and the more often the frequency of the reinforcement that follows after performing behavior, the stronger the SR associations get. The staging of the habituation process relates to hippocampal-striatal neural dynamics. While the dorsal striatum (posterior putamen) is required for repetitive SR habituation, the hippocampus is required for flexible behavior shift (Graybiel, 2008). Thus, in habit formation process, the hippocampus plays an important role in habit learning early on, whereas the dorsal striatum is necessary later.

Stimulus-response (SR) habituation has five common features: inflexible, incremental, unconscious, automatic, and insensitive to reinforcer devaluation (Seger & Spiering, 2011). The key defining habit is the insensitivity to reinforcer devaluation. This resistance to reward devaluation is referred to stimulus salience. Studies demonstrated that a particular behavior is habitual once it becomes stable, long lasting, and persists even in the absence of reward-based reinforcement (Seger, 2018). An electrophysiological study on habit learning revealed that P1 in the visual cortex as an early visual event-related potential (ERP) component could provide an

index of stimulus salience; and is affected by the magnitude of more frequent outcomes during habit learning (Luque et al., 2017). A combination of methods, which can be used to change habits by coaches, has been developed by Greif (see chapter: Motivation, Volition, and Implementation) based on basic psychological and neuroscientific research.

(c) *Temptation of Immediate Rewards*

Whereas cue-triggered desire and resistance of old habit require self-determination of performing daily self-control or implementation accompaniment by the coaches (see chapter: Motivation, Volition, and Implementation), there is another facet of temptation that relates with the ability to resist the temptation of immediate small rewards for the purpose of obtaining a delayed larger reward. The temptation to give in to immediate rewards involves subjective valuation of the rewards based on temporal differences. Behavioral studies found that individuals who have the ability to overcome the temptation to quit, and perseverance towards long-term goals are more likely to succeed in their field. Such ability is often referred to as delay of gratification (Tobin & Graziano, 2010) or grit (Duckworth et al., 2007).

A 40 years longitudinal study (Casey et al., 2011) revealed that individuals who were lack of ability to delay gratification in preschool and consistently showed a lack of self-control in their 20s and 30s performed low impulse control in their 40s. Those low delayers showed increased activity in the ventral striatum when they performed response inhibition tasks, while the high delayers engaged PFC activation. Fortunately, the ability to delay gratification increases during the transition from childhood to adulthood. Another longitudinal study (Achterberg et al., 2016) found that the impulse control capacity improves considerably across developmental stages and is driven by increased maturation of frontostriatal white matter (WM) connectivity.

Lack of perseverance was observed to be correlated with reduced GM volume in the ACC—which is known to play an important role in cognitive control, emotional regulation, error detection, and decision-making (Wang et al., 2017). Studies also found that mild electrical brain stimulation to the midregion of the ACC (mACC) induced a significant improvement of anticipative behavior to challenge and motivation to persevere the challenge (Parvizi et al., 2013). Meanwhile, a line of evidence showed that lower medial frontal theta power was associated with impulsivity, addiction, and lack of perseverance (Leicht et al., 2013; Pandey et al. 2016; Van Noordt et al., 2018). Theta wave (4–8 Hz) is the neural oscillation that is known to be related to cognitive performance and negative reinforcement learning.

The CARE Model: A Brain-Focused Approach

The four aspects of behavior change can be addressed both sequentially or simultaneously through the CARE Model. The terms "CARE" stands for four brain-focused processes that should be conducted by a coach to stimulate specific brain activities or

Fig. 1 The CARE Model and four aspects of sustained change
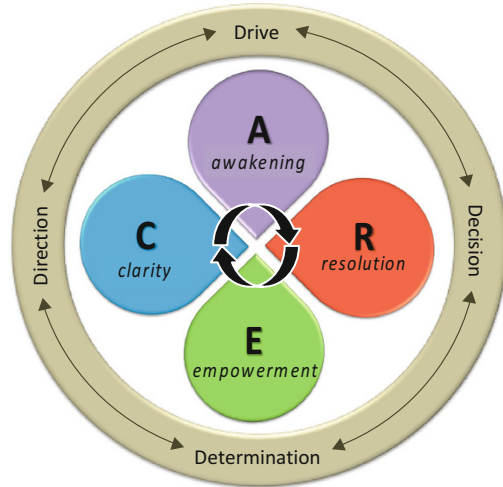
alter specific brain functions that are associated with the four aspects of lasting behavior change. The processes are Clarity, Awakening, Resolution, and Empowerment. In the real setting of a coaching session, a coach may facilitate those processes in a seamless, integrated way to flexibly unfold the inner awareness of the client. However, for a beginner coach, it would be easier to implement the four processes of the CARE Model in a sequential manner. The integrated CARE Model and each associated aspect of change are shown in Fig. 1.

The Core Processes of the CARE Model

The first process—the Clarity—aims to facilitate the client to set a clear goal that reflects the direction towards the future and what specific behaviors need to be changed in order to attain the expected goal. This first process addresses the "Direction" aspect of change. In a typical coaching session, a client may start the conversation by expressing his/her immediate concern, which can take the form of a problem or challenge. In this process, the coach will facilitate the client to shift his/her attention from the current problem toward future goals by consciously using his/her mental time travel ability to imagine the expected future.

To facilitate the goal-setting process during the Clarity process, a brain-focused coach can activate the client's episodic foresight neural mechanisms to construct future imagination about the expected future. Based on the magnitude of temporal distance, a coach can ask the client to explore and imagine the expected future at least in three levels:

– Short-term goal (i.e., "What outcome do you want to get by the end of this session?")

– Intermediate-term goal (i.e., "What do you want to achieve this year?")
– Long-term goal (i.e., "What is the ultimate vision that you want to create?")

The second process—the Awakening—is a process to awaken the intrinsic motivation that strengthens the desire to achieve the goal by changing behavior. The Awakening process is intended to evoke the "Drive" aspect of change. During this process, a coach may focus on activating the neural mechanisms of cognitive desire towards the expected goal that leads to "approach" behavior. Such stimulation can be conducted by unfolding the affective valence underlying the decision to choose a particular goal.

While intrinsic motivation is associated with the activation of the dopaminergic reward system (Di Domenico & Ryan, 2017), studies also showed that the meaning of life is strongly associated with a higher level of intrinsic motivation and commitment (De Klerk et al., 2006; Siwek et al., 2017). Hence, a brain-focused approach to unfold the meaning of life in the Awakening process within the CARE Model is proposed to stimulate "wanting" neural mechanisms of internal motivation. Such brain-focused coaching questions may involve:

– Identity questions (i.e., "Who are you becoming by accomplishing the goal?")
– Purpose questions (i.e., "What is your true purpose of the goal attainment?")
– Values questions (i.e., "How does the goal accomplishment align with your values?")

The third process—the Resolution—focuses on facilitating the client to come up with a solution or solid plan on what actions need to be taken in order to change and reach the desired goal. This third process addresses the "Decision" aspect of change. During the Resolution process, a coach assists the client to harness his/her episodic foresight mechanism to generate the future action plan. The coach may also harness the crucial role of emotion in decision-making by exploring the emotion that is associated with each option or the chosen decision (i.e., "When you imagine executing the plan, how do feel?").

However, the decision-making process in the brain involves several simultaneous steps (Fellows, 2004). Thus, in general, a coach may stimulate the client's future thinking neural mechanisms involving OFC and vmPFC activation by facilitating the decision-making process at least in four levels:

– Options generation (i.e., "What options do you think you have?")
– Options evaluation (i.e., "What are the benefits and risks of each option?")
– Option comparison (i.e., "Which options do you prefer?")
– Choice establishment (i.e., "What is the best solution that you choose?")

Finally, the fourth process—the Empowerment—closes the coaching session by strengthening the willingness to stay on track and persevere in the face of challenges during a certain committed timeframe. This final process of the CARE Model aims to cultivate a strong "Determination" aspect of change. It means that the coach may play a critical role to foster client's self-regulation abilities in overcoming temptations that may hinder a lasting change and long-term goal attainment. A meta-

analysis study revealed that commitment was making leads to lasting behavior change in both short- and long-term (Lokhorst et al., 2013). To foster new habit formation and overcome the temptation of returning to the old habit, a coach may empower the client by evoking commitment using several approaches, such as:

– Commitment making (i.e., "How would you maintain your commitment?")
– Progress evaluation (i.e., "How would you measure a successful progress?")
– Reinforcement plan (i.e., "How would you celebrate your success?")

Another brain-focused approach to strengthen the client's self-control to overcome intertemporal temptation is to align spirituality with perseverance in executing the action plan towards the goal. Studies found that religious cognition involves a neural network that is associated with reward processing and impulse control, and religious people are more likely to forego instant gratification due to higher intertemporal discounting rates (Grafman et al., 2020). It is argued that religious beliefs promote self-regulation by perceiving higher value on larger future rewards—both in life and after-life—instead of instant gratification. This finding supported the previous study that discovered a strong association between personal spirituality and perseverance as well as meaning in life (Barton & Miller, 2015). Hence, coaching techniques to unfold the spiritual meaning of the expected goal and every step to achieve it may increase the ability to be accountable and persevere throughout the client's committed timeline.

The Neuroscience Evidence of the CARE Model

In an ongoing pilot qEEG study, the Clarity process of the CARE Model was associated with increased activity of beta-gamma oscillations that relates with "liking" mechanisms. There was also a tendency of higher left frontal activities over right frontal activities that indicates the arousal of approach motivation towards the goal. Even though the impact of specific questions type (i.e., long-term vs. short-term goal; abstract vs. concrete goal) on brain activation is still under further investigation, the preliminary result implies that the coach's effort in facilitating the client to focus on the future goal(s) seems to increase a sense of hope and stimulate pleasure. A previous fMRI study revealed that inducing hope and dreams through coaching questions was associated with the activation of positive affect and the parasympathetic nervous system (Jack et al., 2013).

Meanwhile, the recent preliminary study discovered that the Awakening process within the CARE Model might induce "liking" and "wanting" mechanisms simultaneously (Puspa et al., 2019) through the activation of delta and beta-gamma frequencies. This simultaneous dual reward processing during the Awakening process indicates two things. First, coaching conversation around the importance and impact of the expected goal may increase cognitive desire or conscious motivation to change and pursue the particular goal. Second, focusing attention to find the inner

reason or the "why" may improve one's happiness and well-being through the mediation role of increased conscious motivation.

Our unpublished evidence from two randomized controlled trials that involves 3- and 6-months coaching period for patients with chronic illness using the entire CARE Model provides further evidence. While the biomarkers of the chronic illness and the patients' depression level decreased significantly after 6 months of coaching, the patients who received 3 months of coaching demonstrated increased left frontal brain activity as well as the decreased intensity of anger and sadness. The patients who received coaching also demonstrated a more sustained positive behavioral change and better metabolism in comparison with the control group. The aforementioned biological, neural, behavioral, and emotional changes of chronic illness patients imply that brain-focused coaching approach—with regard to the CARE Model—may activate and rewire brain pattern in a way that induces multidimensional changes and increase optimum human functioning.

Conclusion

Every coaching approach will stimulate the brain. However, a deep understanding regarding the neuroscience of goal and change provides a promising possibility to induce specific brain activation or brain function shift that is associated with a particular behavior change required to attain the desired goal. Such an approach— referred as "brain-focused coaching"—rooted in neuroscientific evidence, and its effectivity needs to be examined through empirical neuroscience study. The CARE Model is a working coaching model that is developed to address the stimulation and modification of neural mechanisms underlying four aspects of sustained behavior change. Some preliminary evidence has revealed certain neural activations of the CARE Model, and unpublished empirical findings from ongoing studies showed that brain-focused coaching might induce multidimensional change.

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Bullying as a Topic in Coaching

Dieter Zapf and Lena A. Beitler

Roger, head of the department [...] of a renowned bank, reports during coaching that he is affected by bullying. The causes of a financial crisis of the company were assigned onto him, whereupon the senior management bullied him out of the bank and finally dismissed him. Roger [...] was able to file a successful lawsuit and would now like to prevent the recurrence of bullying within the framework of a coaching session.

Cases like that of Roger provide an opportunity for people who have been bullied to consult a coach. Since bullying describes a particular form of escalated ongoing conflict, which is accompanied by complex and multilayered social and organizational aspects, the task of a coach is initially to assess whether and at what point coaching can be helpful in the current stage of the conflict. In order to make this decision, bullying must be separated from its everyday use and defined.

Introduction of the Concept of Bullying

In everyday life, bullying often includes negative social behavior such as hostility, teasing, or injustices perceived as on purpose. From a scientific perspective, however, bullying goes beyond this and refers to a long-lasting, severe conflict that represents an extreme social stressor for those affected (Zapf et al., 1996) and

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sometimes brings about dramatic health impairments (Mikkelsen et al., 2020). Bullying occurs when a person is continuously exposed to targeted, aggressive, and hostile behavior by superiors, colleagues, or even subordinates (Einarsen et al., 2020). Heinz Leymann (e.g. 1996b) as a pioneer of research on bullying suggested that the described actions must occur at least once a week and at least over a period of half a year in order to be described as bullying. Another descriptor of bullying is that there is a pronounced or developing imbalance of power, the bullying victims increasingly find themselves in an inferior position. It becomes more difficult to defend themselves and to put an end to the bullying by their own efforts. One would not speak of bullying if it was a one-off incident of negative social behavior or if the conflict parties were in a balanced relationship of power (see Einarsen et al., 2020 for the definition; Leymann, 1996b). Discussing these circumstances in the initial coaching interview can be a first step in the decision to take up coaching or to refer the client to a psychotherapist.

It has become common practice to distinguish between work-related bullying (e.g., when you have to perform meaningless or humiliating tasks or are deprived of decision-making powers) and personal bullying (e.g., mocking, excluding, or shouting at someone) as in the studies using the Negative Acts Questionnaire (NAQ), a bullying questionnaire by Einarsen et al. (2009). Zapf et al. (1996) have, based on the "Leymann Inventory of Psychological Terror" (LIPT) (Leymann, 1996a), further subdivided personal bullying into *Social isolation*: one no longer talks to the person concerned and cannot be addressed, avoids the person concerned and excludes them; *Attack on the person and their privacy:* ridiculing the person and making jokes about their private life; *Verbal aggression*: criticizing, humiliating, and shouting at the person concerned in front of teams; and *Spreading rumors.* While psychological aggression is typical for bullying (Zapf et al., 1996), physical attacks occur only in a few individual cases. In order to detect bullying, it is important to bear in mind that it is not possible to tell from individual actions whether bullying is present. Instead, the respective context and the overall process must be taken into consideration (Einarsen et al., 2020).

Bullying often extends over several years. In contrast to negative social behavior, it is a lengthy process in which numerous attempts at conflict resolution have usually already failed (Zapf & Gross, 2001). In many studies, bullying victims report an average duration of bullying of 3–4 years (Zapf et al., 2020). The processes can vary a lot (Zapf & Gross, 2001). For example, if an initial conflict remains unresolved, an employee can increasingly become the target of initially subtle and ultimately obvious harassment and end up in the role of victim. The conflict shifts more and more from an outgoing factual conflict to a relationship conflict. Addressing problems fails and leads to the withdrawal of the bullying victim, which in turn results in social isolation from colleagues and the loss of social support. Months of continuous fighting increasingly weaken the person concerned, making them more vulnerable and thus even easier to attack by the perpetrator. They increasingly lose means of influence. From a stress theory point of view, the loss of external (social support, job control) and internal (coping behavior, energy, motivation) resources, coupled with the extreme burden of the insoluble conflict, represents a devastating situation for the

person affected by bullying, who at this stage can no longer cope without external help and/or medical treatment (Zapf & Einarsen, 2005). This exemplary process, in which bullying initially appears subliminally and then becomes increasingly severe, is a frequent occurrence. Nevertheless, there are also other forms of bullying, where a high level of escalation has already been reached from the beginning and continues to intensify. Or situations in which it is not the perpetrator who contributes to the escalation of the conflict, but rather the bullying victim themselves who displays provocative or threatening behavior, thereby triggering an escalation (Zapf & Gross, 2001). It should be noted that the definitions of bullying differ somewhat and criteria for the frequency of negative behavior and the duration of Leymann are by far not always used. One may thus differentiate between severe bullying according to Leymann and less severe forms. This affects the prevalence rates of bullying. In a recent meta-analysis, Zapf et al. (2020, p. 109) found a prevalence rate of 3% for severe bullying and between 9 and 11% bullying when less severe forms were included.

Consequences of Bullying

Bullying behavior may be intentional or unintentional. In any case it humiliates, degrades, and insults the person concerned and leads to stigmatization and victimization. The consequences are correspondingly clear on the part of those affected: victims of bullying often suffer massive psychological and physical impairments of their well-being. Frequently, one observes depressive moods and psychosomatic complaints such as sleep problems, tension, nervousness, and headaches. In addition, anxiety disorders, obsessive-compulsive behaviors, and symptoms similar to post-traumatic stress disorder may develop (Mikkelsen et al., 2020; Schwickerath, 2009), so that cognitive engagement with the bullying incidents may continue for a long time after the end of the incident. Such mental disorders require psychotherapeutic treatment and should never be treated by the coach (see Mental Disorders in Coaching in this manual). The occasional confrontation with negative social behavior would not result in such drastic consequences. However, the repeated and persistent harassment and humiliation leads to severe health effects, increased sick leave, and reduced productivity and motivation (Hoel et al., 2020), so that bullying at the workplace leads to high costs and is often accompanied by dismissals, transfers, and new appointments. At the end of a long process of bullying, the person concerned often has to leave the workplace (Meschkutat et al., 2002; Zapf & Gross, 2001). For those who continue to work or even stay in the company, it is difficult to get out of the cycle of bullying, leave the conflict behind and build new relationships with colleagues.

Causes of Bullying

The causes of bullying are complex and can lie in the organization, the perpetrator, the working group, or the bullying victims (Einarsen et al., 2020; Zapf, 1999). In many cases of bullying, several causes come into play.

Causes in the Organization and in the Working Group

Bullying victims often work under poor conditions and in extremely stressful jobs with few resources such as job autonomy or social support. They report a competitive working climate with envy, interpersonal conflicts, authoritarian leadership, organizational changes, and a lack of a supportive and friendly atmosphere (Salin & Hoel, 2020). A lack of constructive leadership, organizational tolerance of bullying (aggressive behavior is tolerated or even rewarded) (Einarsen et al., 2007) and micro-political approaches (Zapf & Einarsen, 2020) continue to contribute to bullying. These organizational circumstances not only increase stress for the person concerned, but also represent an increased risk of persistent or recurring conflicts that can escalate and end in bullying.

Causes in the Perpetrator

Characteristics of the perpetrator such as lack of empathy, social competence deficits, or being poor in perspective taking and self-reflection (Zapf & Einarsen, 2020) play a role, but also factors such as competition for status and job position, envy, incompetence, hostility and a high but unstable self-esteem have to be considered as potential causes of bullying. If, for example, a superior with such characteristics meets a qualified, long-term employee who would have liked to fill the position himself, he can easily see his authority undermined and takes measures to eliminate this threat by mistreating the employee and "bullying him out."

In a study by Jenkins et al. (2012), some of the perpetrators in management positions claimed to be exposed to a stressful work situation, e.g., high workload and time pressure, due to too little personnel. They admitted being unable to cope with such situations constructively. Such pressure favors aggressive behavior as well as destructive conflict management strategies (Zapf & Einarsen, 2005). Interestingly, evidence suggests that perpetrators are occasionally bullied by others themselves and that the boundaries between the role as perpetrator and the role as victim can become blurred (Lee & Brotheridge, 2006).

Causes in the Bullying Victim

A number of studies show that characteristics on the side of the bullying victim can also contribute to bullying (Zapf & Einarsen, 2020). Lack of emotional stability, self-assertiveness and self-confidence, little effort to integrate into the working group, conflict avoidance, anxiety and shyness in social situations, conflict avoidance, or a general lack of coping resources are factors that typically contribute to being exposed to bullying. But also employees high in conscientiousness, motivation, and performance orientation as well as with an unrealistically high level of self-confidence can come into conflict with their supervisor or with the norm of the working group (Zapf & Einarsen, 2020).

Intervention Options

Coaching can play an important role in the context of organizational measures for the prevention and treatment of bullying (Zapf & Vartia, 2020). One has to consider, however, that although there is empirical evidence for the effectiveness of coaching in general, there is very little empirical evidence for the effectiveness of coaching for victims and perpetrators of bullying (Walsh, 2018). Also, not every coach has experience in this area. As in psychotherapy (Schwickerath & Zapf, 2020) people who are affected by bullying in one way or another, are looking for someone knowledgeable about workplace bullying (Brown & Duffy, 2018). From a coach's point of view, there are three areas in which one can become active: (1) Coaching of a person affected by bullying, (2) Coaching of a bullying perpetrator, and (3) Coaching of managers who (as uninvolved parties) are confronted with bullying problems in their work areas. While coaching of bullying victims is more common, the other two approaches provide new perspectives for coaching practice.

Coaching of Bullying Victims

Many affected persons feel enormously helpless due to the lack of control when bullied. They can neither solve the conflict nor prevent or reduce the bullying behavior or counteract an increase in bullying. Since the situation can no longer be handled by themselves, those affected often seek external help and turn to coaches or psychotherapists, among others. However, these two forms of intervention differ in their approach to problem solving, in the depth of problem solving (see Coaching Definitions and Concepts and Mental Disorders in Coaching in this handbook) and can fulfil different functions in relation to bullying. In many cases of bullying, it is inevitable to first recommend psychotherapy before coaching measures can take effect and develop their helpful potential (Brown & Duffy, 2018). Although bullying

per se is not a clinical diagnosis, it is often associated with the mental disorders listed in section 'Consequences of Bullying' or at least with symptoms that are classified as adaptation disorders according to ICD-10 (Schwickerath, 2009). Coaching in the sense of self-help requires that the client has their own skills and external resources, that they are capable of using them and that they are able to work in self-reflective and self-regulating ways to implement the contents discussed in the coaching and to cope with the critical situation. However, due to the serious psychological effects of their bullying experiences, many of those affected are often unable to meet these requirements, so that existing psychological injuries/impacts should first be dealt with psychotherapeutically and the situations should be analyzed as far as possible. Coaching focuses on result-oriented problem-solving and self-reflection (Greif, 2008), and problem and conflict analysis is carried out from this perspective. It is not possible to deal with the psychological injuries and humiliations and related mental disorders in coaching in the short time available and without appropriate clinical training of the coach (see Mental Disorders in Coaching in this manual).

The coaching process should consider the escalation level of the bullying conflict, distancing and understanding of the bullying, decision-making, and action.

In the beginning, bullying was described as an extremely escalated conflict. This does not mean, however, that all those seeking advice on the basis of bullying are in such extreme conflict situations (e.g., Saam, 2010), as bullying in a broader sense is used in everyday language. Consequently, as a coach you are also confronted with less escalated conflicts and with correspondingly more possibilities for action. Therefore, at the beginning of the coaching it is necessary to diagnose how escalated the conflict is. In the case of severe bullying, separating perpetrator and victim is the only option (Zapf & Gross, 2001). In the case of less severe bullying, other options may be available. Moreover, two tasks have to be mastered: the support of the "daily struggle for survival" at work by strengthening coping skills in dealing with the bullying conflict, and the fundamental solution to the problem of bullying.

In order to regain personal stability, it is often unavoidable to gain distance from the stressful situation (Schwickerath & Holz, 2012; Schwickerath & Zapf, 2020). A longer sick leave, accompanied by psychotherapy, can have a supportive effect. Thanks to psychological stabilization, resources can be freed up for actively coping with the professional situation following therapy, so that a constructive development of coping skills through coaching is possible.

Moreover, practice has shown that bullying victims often have problems to understand why this all happened to them. This is partly due to the fact that they are often quite isolated and excluded from important information channels. Therefore, one of the first steps in the coaching process is to learn to understand why this all happened and what the organization, the perpetrator, and the victim contributed to the situation (Schwickerath & Holz, 2012; Schwickerath & Zapf, 2020).

A number of studies have shown that a large number of people affected by bullying change their jobs (Meschkutat et al., 2002; Schwickerath & Zapf, 2020; Zapf & Gross, 2001). This corresponds to the experience that in conflicts in the third escalation phase of Glasl (1982, 1994) the separation of the conflict parties is usually the only remaining possibility to deal with the conflict. That is, for the bullying

victims the solution will quite frequently be leaving the organization and starting over somewhere else. Leaving the organization is often very difficult, not only because there may be a lack of alternatives on the labor market, but because it is difficult for many bullying victims to detach from their work and to gain distance from their bullying experience (see also Schwickerath, 2009; Schwickerath & Holz, 2012; Schwickerath & Zapf, 2020). Good employees are characterized by a high level of job involvement and organizational commitment. For them in particular, thinking about leaving the organization can be a threat to their self-esteem, especially if this goes along with the belief that the perpetrator should leave the organization and not the victim. Often the realization of the bullying victim that the situation can no longer be tolerated in order to protect oneself and that one must leave the situation in order to put an end to the bullying is a big step. So supporting the victim to make a decision and put them into action are the next steps in the coaching process.

While working on the basic solution, many victims need support in their daily struggle for survival. As studies show, active problem-oriented strategies, such as addressing the perpetrator in response to bullying behavior, and addressing the works council, are not very helpful, as they can make the perpetrator feel additionally provoked (e.g., Knorz & Zapf, 1996; Zapf & Gross, 2001) and offer further opportunities to attack. Accordingly, it is advisable to avoid certain actions by which one can contribute to escalation oneself and to try to avoid the situation.

Moreover, the victim of bullying may have already changed the organization and may have taken up a new job. In this case, the essential task of coaching is to support the integration into the new company. Many bullying victims have become highly suspicious, fear to become a victim of bullying again and easily tend to feel threatened by their new colleagues. With this attitude, the person affected by bullying will have difficulties integrating well in the new workplace. In many cases, therefore, the self-confidence and self-esteem of the victim must be strengthened (Schwickerath, 2009; Schwickerath & Holz, 2012), but also the feeling of security and trust in the new organization. Together, coach and client can reflect on which competencies need to be trained or acquired to avoid bullying in the future. This may involve, for example, communication and conflict management skills and a sensitivity to escalation processes.

Perspectives for Bullying Interventions Through Coaching

The coach's intervention options should not be limited to working with bullying victims, but should be more holistic in order to address the other causes of bullying in organizations, as explained in section 'Causes of Bullying'.

Coaching the Perpetrator

Coaching of bullying perpetrators may appear to be ethically highly questionable at first sight and the question of the moral justifiability of coaching should be asked in any case (Walsh, 2018). Research (e.g., Jenkins et al., 2012; Meschkutat et al., 2002) shows that although it is usually the victims of bullying who leave the company, perpetrators, particularly managers, are also either dismissed or transferred within the company as a result of bullying. Moreover, in most cases, it is the organization that initiates the coaching of a perpetrator. This requires that the organization is aware of the bullying problem, has an anti-bullying policy (Rayner & Lewis, 2020), and wants to find a solution, mostly without wanting to dismiss the perpetrator. Several cases can be differentiated (cf. Zapf & Einarsen, 2020).

First, it is not uncommon for managers to be *unjustifiably accused* of bullying, e.g., when they have to implement organizational changes that cause employees to lose certain privileges, so that these employees feel bullied because of it (Jenkins et al., 2012). In such cases, it may be the accused perpetrators themselves who are seeking a coach's help and motivation for the coaching can be assumed. From the perspective of the organization they may have done nothing wrong. However, they may have been very insensitive to the perspective of the employees concerned. Here, the aim of coaching is to increase sensitivity to the effects of one's own social behavior and to increase the accused managers' conflict management skills.

Second, *socially incompetent perpetrators* have no insight into their bullying behavior, and in the beginning they may have no motivation for the coaching process, but may have to take part, because otherwise they might lose their job. They are not good at reflecting the effects of their own social behavior or they easily overreact under stress and are accused of this behavior as bullying. Their main problem is low self-awareness, and a lack of perspective taking, empathy, and conflict management skills (Walsh, 2018; Zapf & Einarsen, 2020). There is, however, a good chance to induce insight into the perpetrator's misconduct. It is the task of coaching to work through this misconduct and to support a new beginning.

Third, *strategic perpetrators* consider bullying a reasonable management strategy and a means to achieve organizational goals under certain conditions. Ferris et al. (2007, p. 206) proposed "that bullying can be a strategic attempt to influence others at work in ways that not only increase the bully's power and reputation, but may increase the job performance of not only the targets, but of those around them." In most of the cases, this goes along with a climate for bullying (Salin, 2003; Yang et al., 2014), and it is unlikely that anyone will approach a coach. However, if the organization is aware of the bullying problem and has an anti-bullying policy (Rayner & Lewis, 2020), an organization may want to find a solution without dismissing the perpetrator. It is not uncommon that senior managers justify aggressive and hostile behavior because they *believe* their subordinates would only work under intensive pressure. Empirical studies, however, show *negative* associations between forms of abusive behavior and subordinates' performance (Tepper et al., 2017). It may not be easy to change such beliefs. If the organization supports the

coaching process, the coach may lead interviews with some of the subordinates and may come up with examples that question the perpetrator's beliefs. If the coach succeeds in conveying that he or she considers successful behavior change possible and that this new behavior is more successful than the old one, then the coaching can be successful even in such a case (cf. Crashaw, 2010).

Finally, fourth, there are *abrasive perpetrators* (Crawshaw, 2010). Their aggressive behavior, including overcontrol, threats, and humiliation in front of others, causes anxiety and stress in others and has the potential to seriously harm the victims. Such perpetrators are unaware of their behavior and its impact on others, and their bullying behavior is fundamentally the result of perceived threats to their competence due to their high but unstable self-esteem (Zapf & Einarsen, 2020). Abrasive perpetrators are often characterized by the dark triad personality traits—narcissism, psychopathy, and Machiavellianism (Walsh, 2018). For this group, coaching may often not be effective and some (e.g., Kets de Vries, 2014) argue that such personalities are impossible to change.

In conclusion, for abrasive perpetrators it is questionable whether coaching will work at all or whether psychotherapy is more adequate (Walsh, 2018). For strategic and socially incompetent perpetrators success likely depends on an organizational climate of intolerance regarding bullying. To make coaching successful, it is important that organizational conflict management procedures including the coaching activities are perceived as fair (Jenkins et al., 2011; Zapf & Vartia, 2020) so that perpetrators often struggling with prejudice can develop trust in the coaching process (Crawshaw, 2010).

Coaching of Managers

A third area relevant to coaching is that of managers who are not themselves involved in bullying, but in whose area of responsibility the bullying takes place. Managers have a great responsibility when it comes to detecting, giving feedback, and coping with bullying. This is easier if organizations have clear policies and procedures for managing conflicts and bullying (Zapf & Vartia, 2020).

Identifying bullying requires first of all a more in-depth examination of the issue and an awareness of the signs and criteria of bullying. This also includes knowledge of environmental factors fostering bullying, such as high levels of frustration and stress that encourage aggressive behavior. Together with a coach, managers can work out how to address bullying behavior constructively with colleagues and employees, how to set clear limits and, if necessary, impose sanctions, so that a climate of open feedback can be created in the company with zero tolerance for bullying. Here it is important that the manager himself or herself serves as a role model for the desired behavior and lives the agreement reached on behavioral goals.

Managers act as carriers of information and their role in the company can help to raise awareness of the issue of bullying, initiate employee training for dealing with conflicts and their escalation, and establish respectful behavior as part of their performance management. However, it is also their responsibility to contribute to

basic solutions for dealing with bullying within the framework of organizational development. What is generally true of organizational change is also true of bullying: if the support of top management is lacking, organizational development measures usually lead nowhere (e.g., Porras & Robertson, 1992).

Conclusion

Bullying victims and perpetrators as well as managers in whose area of responsibility bullying has occurred may be potential coaching clients. Whether or not coaching will be successful, depends on the organizational context. Measures such as an anti-bullying policy (Rayner & Lewis, 2020) as well as general strategies for dealing with conflicts in the sense of an overarching conflict management system that takes into account the different levels of escalation (Zapf & Vartia, 2020) are important here. Reports based on fair procedures to investigate bullying complaints (Hoel & Einarsen, 2020) and conflict management systems that are perceived as fair (Zapf & Vartia, 2020) may be of great help in the coaching process. Even if an individual case of bullying has been successfully resolved by coaching the persons concerned, organizational factors such as leadership, values, culture, and organizational climate can still be conducive to conflicts and thus to bullying in the company. Accordingly, coaches should consider and address the far-reaching antecedents and consequences of bullying as a point of reference in their work.

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Burnout: Characteristics and Prevention in Coaching

Siegfried Greif and Martina Bertino

Upcoming Burnout Due to Permanent Overload

Case Study: A Manager in a State of Stress

Michael has been working for his current employer for 8 years and has been a divisional manager in a large company for 4 years. For about a year now he has been "permanently under stress," often exhausted and has the feeling he is not performing as well as before. The company had temporarily fallen into an economic crisis. Three members of his team were prematurely retired and not replaced. The remaining team had to take over their tasks. Although the company's economic situation has improved, most members of the team are working overtime to keep up.

Michael is working long hours and weekends. He knows he has good employees but feels that important work is left undone when he is not around. This further increases his desire to be always present.

He finds it increasingly difficult to get up in the morning and go to work every day. Almost every night he wakes up and cannot go back to sleep because he is brooding over unfinished work. Already in the morning he is tired. Even when he is on holiday, he cannot rest because he thinks a lot about his work and the daily stress. He wants time with his family and his hobby, the baseball club. A friend, with whom he has talked about his situation, strongly recommends coaching against burnout.

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Definition and Symptoms

"Burnout" affects many professionals who feel their permanent overload work is becoming too much for them. They feel exhausted and have hardly any energy left for their daily tasks. Not only well-known athletes, but even board members of companies have revealed they have suffered from burnout and have sought professional help (Striemer, 2015). In order not to go straight to a clinic, many professionals seek outpatient help from coaches who specialize in the prevention of burnout.

The term burnout was introduced as a technical term by Freudenberger (1974). He assumed burnout mainly affects those who had previously been dedicated and committed in social helping activities or human service professions. This commitment is expressed in the well-known sentence: "Whoever is burnt out, must have burned before!" In the meantime, however, burnout phenomena have been found in numerous occupational groups, not only in helping professions and even without a preliminary phase of particularly commitment in the activity (Burisch, 2010, p. 215 ff.). Burnout is therefore seen as a general syndrome.

Broadly speaking, burnout is defined by Pines and Kafry (1978, p. 499) as "a general experience of physical, emotional and attitudinal exhaustion." Maslach (1982, p. 3; 2017, p. 143 f.) differentiates between three dimensions of the burnout experience: (1) exhaustion (having worn out, lost energy, become depleted, and fatigued), (2) cynicism, and (3) a decline in professional efficacy. Originally the second dimension was called "depersonalization" referring to a lack of interest in others (for example, a patient in hospital is referred to by the nurse as "the kidney in room 12"). Maslach (2017) prefers to call it "cynicism" and mentions that it refers more generally to negative or inappropriate attitudes toward clients.

In coaching, not only the core symptoms should be considered. Symptomatically, the ability to recover is increasingly severely restricted because exhaustion can only be relieved with delay or not at all by sleep, rest at weekends, or on holiday (Greif, 2014). Further symptoms can include a crisis-like decline in performance, leading to incapacity to work, or general hopelessness and depression, and even risks of suicide. At the latest with such symptoms, instead of coaching, psychotherapeutic treatment by specially trained and experienced therapists is required. We will come back to this.

Causes

A model of the hypothetical causes of burnout and its effects was developed by Perlman and Hartman (1982). Based on the studies available at the time, they distinguished organizational and personal variables that together contribute to the stress potential (e.g., high workload in the organization and insufficient coping strategies of the person). Using various other variables, they explained why

perceived stress is not managed effectively and, thus, leads to burnout in the long term. (For general information on the concept of stress and stress models, see chapter "Stress and Stress Management in Coaching").

Burisch (2010, p. 76) also considers stress as a "key phenomenon" in burnout in his overview of different models and the state of research. After his practical observations, Burisch (2015, p. 12 f.) introduced a distinction that described the possible characteristics of stress situations that can cause burnout.

1. "First-order stress": "Something unpleasant cannot be turned off or something desired cannot be achieved contrary to expectations."
2. "Second-order stress": "If this stress is not reduced in a transitional phase of futile attempts at coping, but perhaps even worsens, because the person 'got lost' in the struggle' with a lot of energy," the risk of burnout arises according to Burisch due to the helplessness experienced.

Permanent stress perceived as a hopeless situation is not the only cause of burnout. Burisch (2015, p. 10) developed an onion model with five levels:

1. Individual level as the core: Wishes, needs, goals, abilities, personality traits, and attitudes, for example, a fixation on performance goals.
2. Interpersonal level: For example, excessive performance expectations of superiors.
3. Institutional level: For example, an organizational culture with little recognition and consideration.
4. Level of society: Straining developments, including social conflicts.
5. Global level: Such as global crises affecting one's own work.

A meta-analysis by Alarcon et al. (2009) showed that burnout at the individual level correlates negatively with many personality traits such as self-esteem, self-efficacy, control, emotional stability, extraversion, tolerance, positive affect, optimism, initiative and resilience and positively with conscientiousness and negative effect.

Diagnostic Methods

In severe burnout, the symptoms of burnout and depression overlap (Schonfeld & Bianchi, 2016). To diagnose and treat depression, specialist training or qualifications may be required, such as for psychiatrists, psychotherapists, and clinical psychologists. Coaches who have clients with suspected burnout should look to refer clients to a specialist (Greif, 2014). It is recommended to use coaching only as a preventive measure to prevent burnout in cases of ongoing permanent stress and initial emotional exhaustion or in the early stages of burnout, if, as in the initial case, no pathological symptoms have yet developed.

Burnout Diagnosis

For diagnostic pre-screening, coaches can use proven standard questionnaires to record burnout. Through the screening, first diagnostic information can be obtained. However, this does not replace a clinical diagnosis. The classic screening instrument of burnout is the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) (Maslach et al., 1997). It contains 25 items in three subscales: (1) emotional exhaustion, (2) reduced performance, and (3) depersonalization (or cynicism).

The standard basis for clinical diagnoses by specialists and psychotherapists is the International Classification of Diseases (ICD), Version 10 (WHO, 1992). The key Z 73.0 describes a state of total "emotional exhaustion," which can be used for clinical coding in the case of burnout. However, this does not classify burnout as a disease, but can only be given as a syndrome from the area of "problems related to difficulties in coping with life" in addition to other diagnoses. This syndrome refers to important life circumstances which the practitioner considers to be diagnostically or treatment-relevant (Friedrich & Henningsen, 2014). An explicit inclusion of burnout in this classification system is planned for the future ICD version 11. Similar to the definition of Maslach, burnout there is defined as a syndrome "resulting from chronic workplace stress that has not been successfully managed" and is characterized by "(1) feelings of energy depletion or exhaustion, (2) increased mental distance from one's job, or feelings of negativism or cynicism related to one's job, and (3) a sense of ineffectiveness and lack of accomplishment" (WHO, 2020).

Phase Models for Burnout

There are numerous models for describing the phases or stages of the development of burnout. Most of them have been published by practitioners. They may seem plausible, but as Burisch (2010) states, no phase model has yet been empirically confirmed. It is methodologically difficult to prove burnout only occurs after preceding phases that run in a certain order. Since it makes little sense to base coaching for burnout prevention on such questionable phase models, we recommend instead, especially in burnout prevention, to pay attention to symptoms that can be considered early warning symptoms (see chapter "Stress and Stress Management in Coaching") and especially on the perceived emotional exhaustion.

Intervention Methods

Effectiveness of Different Methods

In view of the high significance that burnout has had in the professional world and the public for many years, one would expect there are now numerous

methodologically carefully conducted studies on the effectiveness of the intervention methods used in the case of burnout. However, this is by no means the case. In the following, we present the results of a summary of the effectiveness studies available to date and two meta-analyses.

Awa et al. (2010) found only 25 studies in their literature review on intervention in burnout. Not all studies compare the effects found with randomized control groups, but only the differences between the psychological state before and after the intervention. Seventeen studies involved different types of interventions at the individual level (cognitive-behavioral training, psychotherapy, counselling, competence training, communication training, and relaxation exercises) and only two studies were conducted on programs related to the organizational level (change of work processes or shift work). The remaining six were combinations. As 80% of the interventions showed significant reductions in burnout scales, the authors conclude that the interventions are effective. However, follow-up studies show that the number of effects decreases over time, with the combination of individual and organizational interventions showing the longest-lasting effects.

In a meta-analysis by Maricuțoiu et al. (2016) on the effectiveness of different interventions in burnout with randomized control groups, 47 studies were evaluated. The following types of intervention were distinguished: cognitive-behavioral techniques, meditation and relaxation techniques, development of interpersonal skills and development of knowledge, and work-related skills. The results show the effects achieved by these interventions are usually rather weak (13 studies with general burnout scales $d = 0.224$ and with exhaustion scales $d = 0.172$), because spontaneous recovery from burnout also occurs in the control groups. For depersonalization scales the values are even closer to zero ($d = 0.042$). At least there are medium effects ($d = 0.51$) in the reduction of exhaustion through relaxation methods (see chapter "Stress and Stress Management in Coaching"), as well as inter-individual competences ($d = 0.39$). Cognitive-behavioral treatments (see chapter "Behavioral Modification and its Relevance in Coaching"), however, have, contrary to expectations, only a weak effect ($d = 0.27$) in improving inter-individual competences. The effect is even lower on scales for burnout and exhaustion ($d = 0.15$).

The authors argue a strong reduction of burnout is only possible after long and specifically designed interventions. The evidence suggests it is not enough to change individual behavior by brief application of cognitive-behavioral methods or to reduce emotional exhaustion only by relaxation.

Perski et al. (2017) performed a meta-analysis of eight studies on the long-term effects of burnout interventions on increasing earlier return-to-work. They found that the interventions in the studies (cognitive-behavioral treatment, relaxation methods, and job stress-related counselling) result only in small significant mean effects in comparison to as usual or wait-list controls. In addition, the heterogeneity between studies was considerable. No significant effects were observed on exhaustion, depression, or anxiety.

Psychotherapeutic Treatment of Burnout

At least if the symptoms of burnout become more severe, there is a large overlap with mental disorders. Already Pines and Kafry (1978) found a high correlation ($r = 0.7$) to depression scales. Even after newer studies, Schonfeld and Bianchi (2016) do not consider burnout and depression to be separable and therefore recommend a depression therapy for treatment.

This is not the place to give an overview of the various methods of outpatient and inpatient treatment of depression by psychotherapy and drug therapy (Hautzinger, 2013). Fear of stigmatization can cause depressed clients to avoid necessary psychotherapy and seek help from a coach instead. In such cases, the coach should accompany and pave the clients on their way to the necessary psychotherapeutic treatment. Special attention should be paid to whether there is life fatigue and risks of suicidal tendencies. In this case, the regional health or crisis intervention services should be called in as soon as possible.

Burnout Prevention Through Coaching

Improvement by Restructuring the Burnout-Inducing Conditions and Strengthening Environmental Resources

Since permanent overload and strain due to stress in the working and living environment is regarded as the main cause of burnout, a reduction of stressors in the sense of restructuring the conditions, that cause permanent stress is the main starting point for preventive intervention. However, if one looks through the Internet pages with offers for burnout prevention through coaching, the focus is almost exclusively on individual behavioral prevention, for example, through relaxation techniques and meditation, stress management, self-care, person-oriented diagnostic methods, dissolving inner blockades, restoring inner balance, strengthening resilience, or even through programs for healthy nutrition. This even applies to offers with consulting and coaching on company health management systems. Only very rarely can one find offers with analyses of organizational structures and stressors or health risk factors and plan subsequent measures to reduce them. In the meta-analyses summarized above on the effectiveness of interventions for burnout, there are only very few structure-changing interventions.

The list of the German National Conference on Occupational Safety and Health (Nationale Arbeitsschutzkonferenz, 2015) includes general stressors which should be taken into account in restructuring burnout-inducing conditions:

- High time pressure and low decision latitude
- Too much variability of tasks
- Too high qualification requirements
- Problems in communication and cooperation

- Environmental stressors (noise, heat, drought, etc.)
- Insecurity
- High responsibility
- Strong emotional involvement
- Working hours too long

In our experience, clients greatly appreciate when coaches conduct a thorough analysis of their stress situation. They are very interested if the coach has expert knowledge of the stress factors and their somatic, psychological, and social consequences (see chapter "Stress and Stress Management in Coaching"). In coaching, it is always advisable in addition to determining the positive environmental resources, which, according to the findings of stress research, can moderate or buffer the stress intensity. This includes, above all, social support from other people in the environment (including the support from the coach) as well as an expansion of the decision latitude at work. The joint analysis of stressors and resources is called "resource-oriented stress analysis."

Employees, as well as managers, often accept job stressors such as time pressure as unchangeable, although with a precise analysis at least small improvements are often possible, which reduce the time pressure without additional personnel. In the initial example, Michael, the manager, did not dare to demand more personnel, even though the company was making good profits. Through a resource-oriented stress analysis in coaching, he was encouraged to develop a plan together with his team on how to reduce permanent time pressure and how to improve processes and mutual social support and reduce the growing absence rate. He presented his suggestions for improvement to the top management, together with a stress analysis and personnel cost-benefit calculation. To his surprise, Michael was even able to convince them that an additional employee position was required. Regarding his coping with risks of burnout, it was psychologically important for Michael to regain hope and strength by recognizing concrete practical improvements. The acceptance and support immediately improved the team climate and mutual support.

Behavioral Prevention: Individual Resources, Relaxation, and Self-Calming

In addition to burnout prevention by improving structural conditions and strengthening external resources, interventions from the large field of behavioral prevention are always recommended in burnout coaching. They aim to enlarge the personal resources of the client to cope with the stress situation and to improve their potentials and strengths, and their self-calming in and after the situation. As already mentioned above the following interventions are common:

1. Cognitive-behavioral methods to cope with stress and to reduce dysfunctional thoughts.
2. Relaxation and meditation methods (see chapters "Mindfulness in Coaching"; "Stress and Stress Management in Coaching").

The methods of the first group originate from psychotherapy (Hautzinger, 2013). It is characteristic that the triggers of feelings of stress and behavior are reconstructed very carefully, together with the feelings, thoughts, and mental states that sustain problematic reactions. Equally, changes in behavior and inner processes are analyzed together with the client (see chapter "Behavioral Modification and its Relevance in Coaching").

Probably the most common methods of burnout prevention in coaching are relaxation techniques. The chapter on stress and stress management in this handbook deals with this in more detail and describes an individual case of how, in conjunction with breathing techniques with biofeedback, cardiological measures can be improved by rigorous implementation over several months. For clients to be able to carry out daily relaxation exercises despite severe stress, however, daily support of the implementation over several weeks is often necessary (see chapter "Motivation, Volition and Implementation in Coaching"). Otherwise, especially in the case of burnout, feelings of helplessness can arise if the clients, despite coaching, do not manage to carry out their exercises. Support is necessary, until they have developed a new habit that is experienced as satisfying behavior. If, despite the support of implementation by their coach, the clients are unable to calm down, reduce their emotional exhaustion and activate themselves for everyday activities, this is an indication that coaching is not sufficient for prevention and that psychotherapeutic treatment is necessary.

Healthy Sleep

Healthy sleep is an important characteristic for good recovery abilities. Burnout prevention offerings on the Internet, rarely mention sleep counselling, although studies on the connection between burnout and sleep disorders are now available. Grossi et al. (2015) provide an overview of the current state of research on the relationship between burnout and sleep disorders. The results of 69 studies show that sleep disorders occur during burnout and can maintain it.

Litwiller et al. (2017) evaluated 152 studies on the sleep quality of employees in a meta-analysis. The results show that sleep quality and length correlate negatively with work stress and various health criteria as well as psychological well-being. According to the longitudinal studies mentioned by Litwiller et al., sleep disorders are an additional risk factor for an increase in exhaustion. Sleep disorders are therefore not only symptoms but can also be a critical contributory cause of increasing emotional exhaustion in the course of burnout. A vicious circle of insomnia is used to explain its development and maintenance (Spiegelhalder et al., 2011). As illustrated in Fig. 1, insomnia is triggered by stressors, but can then itself lead to a further negative cycle of effects.

A distinction can be made between problems falling asleep and sleeping through the night. These can be improved based on current knowledge and rules on sleep hygiene (Spiegelhalder et al., 2011; Stuck et al., 2020; Zulley, 2008). A diagnosis in a sleep laboratory can clarify whether an organic sleep disorder is present (e.g., sleep
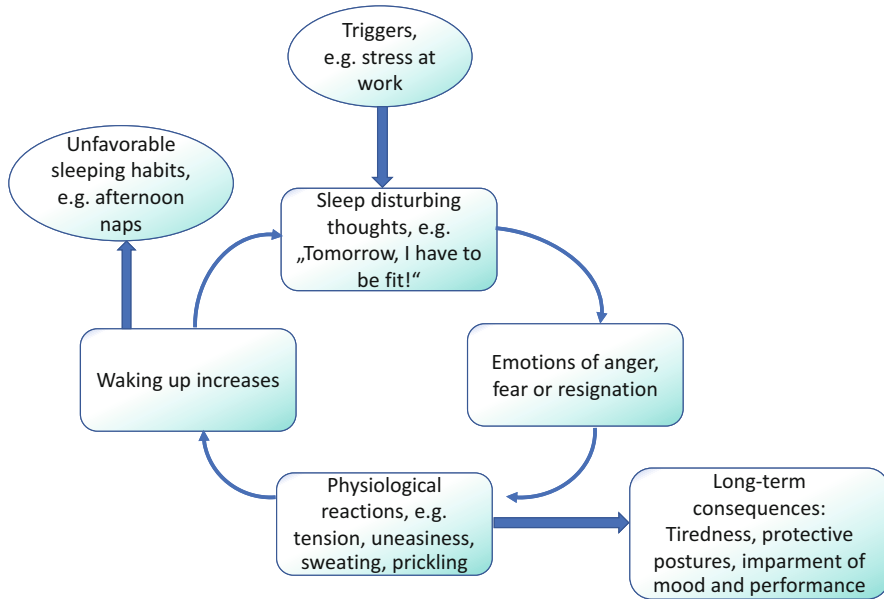
Fig. 1 Cycle of insomnia (modified according to Spiegelhalder et al., 2011)

apnea, restless leg syndrome or diseases, or side effects of medication). Nonorganic sleep disorders can be accompanied by various psychological disorders, such as addictions, anxiety disorders, or depression. The sleep disorder is in itself a recognized disease (see WHO, 1992, ICD-10, Sleep disorders, F51.x).

Developing and Evaluating Effective Combinations of Methods

To satisfy an increasing demand, coaches offer relaxation and meditation methods, stress management, self-care, dissolving inner blockages, restoring inner balance, or strengthening resilience in the case of burnout symptoms. However, the meta-analysis of Maricuțoiu et al. (2016), reproduced above, shows these and other methods of behavioral prevention have hardly any effects. In the coaching offers, these methods are praised as if they were highly effective but Maricuțoiu et al. (2016) criticize the far too optimistic expectations regarding the effectiveness of these intervention methods. To achieve stronger effects, they call for specialized methods for burnout and demand to extend the duration of the intervention. It should also be clear to coaches with practical experience in this field that we need more effective interventions in cases of permanent stress and severe burnout symptoms. As a consequence, we recommend to develop and evaluate combined interventions, which improve burnout prevention as described above, by long-term restructuring

the burnout-inducing conditions and strengthening the use of environmental resources in combination with stress management coping, relaxation techniques, and support of healthy sleeping.

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Business Coaching in Top Management

Uwe Böning

Business Coaching with a Top Manager

A divisional manager from the production department of a DAX company approached me to see if I would be available for business coaching. He knew me as a leader of management seminars in his company. His goal was to prepare for a possible position on the board of directors by developing his personal leadership behaviour, his way of working together and his personal appearance. His previous assessments and the feedback he had received would have pointed to a corresponding potential, but also contained learning points.

The coaching objectives were specified in concrete terms in the initial interview:

1. Develop his leadership behaviour, with the main focus on development of a stronger persuasive style through more empathy in direct personal communications and improvement of his communications in presentations.
2. Enhance understanding of group dynamics in the board of directors in order to be able to work with board members.
3. Improve his skills in conflict management to achieve an appropriate balance between enforcement and cooperation.

A coaching period of about 1 year was agreed upon with monthly coaching sessions of 2 h each. Optionally, the coaching partner's support in internal presentations and team meetings with his managers (shadowing) was agreed upon. In the monthly coaching sessions, the current important communication scenarios and experiences from the time between sessions were reflected upon. Based on the critical situations, positive alternatives for the behaviour and attitudes of the coaching partner were sought together.

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   The central medium in the process was the self-reflective dialogue between coach and coaching partner. The coach drew on evidence of interaction with board members and colleagues, the group dynamics, and the political constellations in the board. A personal profile of the possible future role was derived from the combination of the coaching partner's own role model ideas and the coach's experiences outside the company. Regular shadowing situations (especially project meetings with direct reports) served as a basis for open feedback in order to work out concrete progress and further improvement possibilities (The role of the coach was made transparent in the project meetings). In the second half of the coaching process, more attention was paid to the board candidate's appearance on the floor and his ability to make small talk in various social situations. The business coaching was continued in its proven manner for about half a year in its new role. The selected departmental and project meetings were also successfully continued.

Top Managers and Executives

The terms 'Senior Manager' or 'C-suite' is often used to refer to executives or managers of the two top management levels of large companies (groups). However, the terms are sometimes used synonymously. In their role as overall managers, top managers deal with the results-oriented aspects of corporate management, i.e., general management, from their traditional primary perspective. Consequently, by leadership they primarily understand corporate management, i.e., the goal- and results-oriented control of a larger or smaller unit. Unspoken this is contrasted with the interpretation of leadership in the sense of leading those at the lower levels of the hierarchy. Here, the expectation is that leadership refers first and foremost to people, their feelings, their motivation and the right behaviour, attitudes and appropriate communication with employees. This distinction is already evident in the frequent use of language by decision makers at the highest hierarchical level and the subordinate management levels in the company (see Böning, 2015b).

   Large companies and corporations, such as those listed at the top of the DAX, have a number of typical characteristics: their considerable size (measured in terms of turnover or number of employees), a complex structure, a pronounced number of hierarchical levels, and often a different corporate culture than is common among many SMEs.

Top Management as Elite

For a long time, the top executives or managers of a corporation were almost undoubtedly counted among the business elite. For some years now, however, there has been much criticism (cf. Sutton, 2008; Babiak & Hare, 2007; Dammann, 2007; Kets de Vries, 2004): The salary excesses of some senior managers, the golden

handshakes in the forced resignations, and failed performance has brought a more critical perspective. These views are mixed with the impulse for a new understanding of leadership roles triggered by digitalization (see Industry 4.0), the new communication media and the start-up movement. Increasingly, the public impression is one of an aloof old elite from old industries, who were confronted with a new understanding of entrepreneurship, new forms of management and new ideas of flattened hierarchies in new industries—both nationally and internationally (e.g. Laloux, 2015).

Both the old and the newly emerging worlds of work and life show differences that can be easily categorized in terms of milieu theory. This makes it possible to gain a perspective that makes both horizontal and vertical differentiations understandable (see Böning, 2015a, b). The milieu-theoretical approaches of Schulze (2000) and Wippermann (2011) will be presented here as representative of the various concepts from both academic social research and market research (including Bourdieu, 2013; Hradil, 1987; SINUS, 2015; Wippermann, 2011).

The sociological concept of Schulze (2000) is not only based on stratum-related attributes such as income, status or occupation, but also on typical everyday aesthetic inclinations and lifestyles. The underlying differentiating milieu signs include, for example language, values, manners, clothing styles, typical possessions and consumption activities (ibid., p. 278 ff.). The two largest milieus are the self-realization milieu and the entertainment milieu. In addition, there are the level, integration and harmony milieus (Schulze, 2000; Böning, 2015a).

Wippermann's nine DELTA milieus (Fig. 1), a further development of the original Sinus approach (SINUS, 2015), are positioned in the portfolio on the basis of a combination of social class and the basic orientation in terms of values and attitudes (shared traditions, self-realization or self-management). Each of the nine milieus is further subdivided into 2–3 sub-milieus.

In line with this approach, top managers in the company can be viewed as an independent milieu with many commonly shared values and rules, which on the one hand is clearly different from the milieus of the subordinate levels and on the other hand bears a perceptible similarity to comparable functions in other companies and sectors. What is meant here is a commonality that marks membership of the top business milieu and, in addition to professional competence, is a key factor in determining whether a person is a member of top management. Performance alone does not seem to be sufficient (Hartmann, 2002). In the top echelons of business, this includes, for example, mastery of the specific language, behavioural and dress code, a self-confident parquet-like appearance, a high level of dialogue and argumentation skills, personal sovereignty in conflict situations, a positive basic entrepreneurial attitude, a clear ability to make decisions and act, as well as perceptible politeness, tact and a high level of emotional self-control (cf. Böning, 2015b). To this must be added as an aspect the feeling of belonging to a distinguished group of people who differ from many others in terms of income, social status, responsibility and creative power: the decision makers.

Figure 2 summarizes various aspects which, in my opinion, should be taken into account in business coaching with managers because they characterize important differences experienced between top and middle managers.

Fig. 1 Delta Milieus in Germany: basic and sub-milieus according to Wippermann (Source: www.delta-sozialforschung.de)

Procedure considering the hierarchy level

Top Management		Middle Management
Own ressort and share of responsibility for the whole company Internal orientation at the whole company and external orientation on the market as well as on the political framwork	Area of responsibility	Own specialist division Intersection of immediate environment on the inside and partly outside Primarily internal orientation and intersection
(1) Overall system company (2) Business leadership, management of organization	Leadership perspective	(1) Sub-system department/area (2) „human resources/personnel management", supervision of staff
Big picture, overall perspective, political self-assertion	Mental direction	Detailed main topics, fight for controlled changes and personal career opportunities
Probation in the role as top-manager, arrangement of the enviroment	Meta-goals	Further development of own personality (as a human being) and role-security within the scope of given tasks, personal effect on the environment
Strategy, tactics, overall result, success, power, self-discipline control of emotionas, rationality, analysis, politics, individuality, arrangement, autonomy, assertion, politeness/decency, tactfulness, form/style, conflict-management, sovereignty, attitude, personality and role, work: part of self-definition	Core values/ Attitude towards others	Profession quality, succes, partial result, allow and act out emotions, authentity, openness, fairness, induviduality and team, teamwork, thoughtfulness and open competition, confidence, open conflict, personality before professional role, work-life-balance, co-operation
Coaching-process more analytic handling than empathic support, suggestions for solutions Company-topics	Coaching-Process	Coaching-process is more emotional/ empathetic support than analytic handling, support in finding solutions and transfer by the coach Topics of personal development
Coach primary sounding-board, driving force, sparring parner, advisor, guide, appreciation with controlled proximity/distance, segmented trust, payed consultant as available service provider, expectation of self-positioning by the coach with remaining neutrality and freedom of choice for the coaching partners (final decision maker) Positioning of the coach: recommendations expected	Relationship Coaching-Partner (CP) And Coach(C)	Coach primary clarification- and navigation assistant such as adviser, „trainer", emotional catalyst, „unconditional appreciation", closeness, trust, expectation of neutrality by the coach as foundation of helping people help themselves on the part of the coaching-partners.
Primary conversation/dialogue, questions, rational/logical analysis, discussions, feedback, clarification, orientation and analysis of the situation, „friction" as stimulating countercheck for the „coaching-partner"	Key aspects of intervention	Conversation/dialogue, empathetic understanding, activation of ressources, experience-activating procedures, establishment of personality and role of the „coaches"

Fig. 2 Derivations for the coaching practice

Personality Traits of Managers at Different Hierarchical Levels

An undisputed basic assumption is: personality traits influence coaching and its results. Two questions to be derived from this are: Do the top managers of different hierarchical levels of large commercial enterprises who participate in coaching differ in their personality traits? Firstly, in comparison with other groups and secondly, between different levels? In my dissertation (Böning, 2015b), I have investigated these questions among others and have used six standardized questionnaires to examine the personality traits of top to middle managers of large companies. The relevant results can be summarized in this way:

1. The managers differed significantly from the respective norm samples, i.e. from non-executives or from the overall population.
2. The personality traits of the managers who took part in business coaching are in line with earlier results of management research regarding the characteristic features of successful managers.
3. In addition, some personality differences were found between top, senior and middle managers.
4. Based on the above results, the following differentiation is proposed:

   (a) Basic characteristics, which are generally characteristic of successful managers: these include, for example extraversion, openness to experience, conscientiousness, confidence in success, status orientation, professional ambition and willingness to spend.
   (b) Role-related characteristics, which have a hierarchical reference: for example preference for intuition, trust, sense of duty and experience of success in the job. Here, the top managers showed significantly higher values than senior managers. With regard to the openness of the system of values and standards, however, the values of top managers were significantly lower.
   (c) Individual characteristics, which neither turned out to be basic characteristics nor appear to be centrally linked to the leadership role: for example goal setting, private and public self-awareness and the general expectation of self-efficacy.

The Mysterious Car Wash

Similar to day-to-day business, the difference between top managers and subordinate management levels can be observed relatively often and clearly in public appearances, in project work, in leadership training and also in coaching.

In order to support executives—and especially top managers—in business coaching to do a fulfilling and role-appropriate job very well, it is not only important to support them in their personal development, but also in their specific role development appropriate to their milieu. As described above, promotion and success not only require a high level of professional competence, but also increasingly social

acceptance in their social environment. Therefore, for successful coaching it is imperative to become aware not only of the psychological personality and interaction aspects of the respective person, but also of the rules of the game, the codes of conduct and communication processes as well as the specific corporate culture of the target company.

Managers who are about to take a developmental step to the top may have to prepare themselves for a more or less conspicuous change that affects their behaviour and attitude as well as the expectations of top management colleagues as a systemic framework. In individual cases, this can mean a positive further development, but in negative cases it can also trigger a drastic change that is experienced as an unintentional alienation of one's own personality—in the self-perception or the external perception of observers. For this process of changing the role as well as the person I use the symbolically and ironically meant term of the mysterious car wash. What is meant by this is the conscious as well as unconscious, at least officially unexplained and yet formative organizational dynamic of companies, which, with the upwardly changing work and competence focuses, information levels, roles and political requirements, can lead to a new perspective on leadership (see above) and a different way of dealing with the organization—and thus to a multiple distancing.

Topics in C-Suite Coaching

In business coaching with executives, a number of differences in the topics can be found depending on the hierarchical level (Böning, 2015b). As the following topic map (see Fig. 3) shows, basic topics (grey), which according to my surveys more or less occupy 'all' managers, can be distinguished from the main topics of the different hierarchy levels (coloured).

It is important to note the same terms alone do not mean the same in every respect, as the overall situation must always be taken into account. Depending on the specific corporate culture, hierarchical level and the associated role, the concrete task, the situation-specific objectives and the individual personality, the content of the coaching topics can take on different concrete forms.

The main topics in my study were determined by the frequency with which the coaching partners named the topics and the resulting differences in rank (RP = rank; Böning, 2015b).

Top managers named more frequently than middle managers, named more frequently than their coaching topics:

– Questions of power that affect oneself (RP 4 vs. 8)!
– Self-efficacy (RP 4 vs. 7)
– Domestic policy within the company (micro-politics) (FP 4 vs. 11)
– Crisis management (personal and corporate) (FP 8 vs. 11)
– Relationship to colleagues (RP 1 vs. 8)!
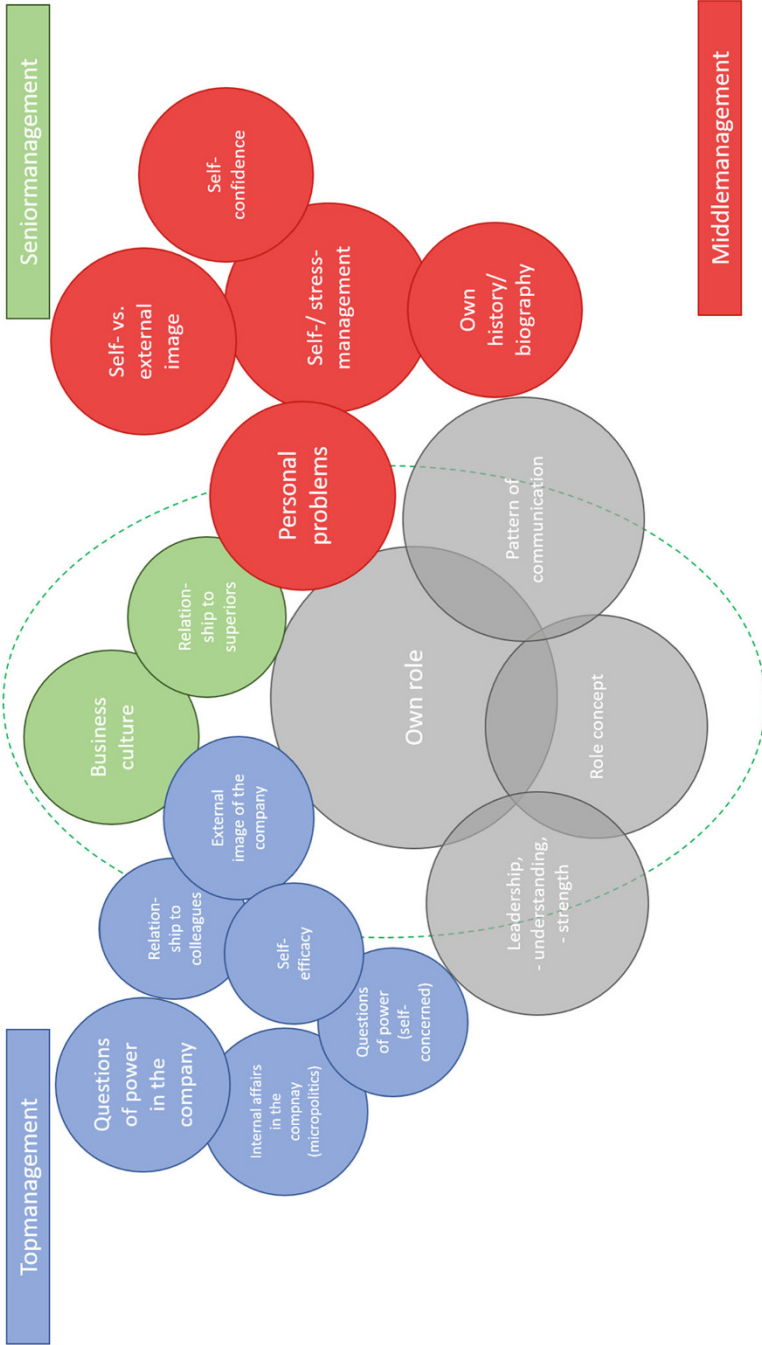
Fig. 3 Topics in business coaching with top managers and executives of the following levels (Böning, 2015b)

Top managers mentioned the topic less often than middle managers:

– Self vs. external image (RP 7 vs. 3)

They did not mention the subject at all:

– Personal problems (RP 0 vs. 9)!

In coaching with middle managers (vs. top managers) the following topics were in the foreground:

– Own history/biography (RP 1 vs. 7)!
– Self-confidence (RP 3 vs. 9)!
– Self management/stress management (RP 6 vs. 10)

The topics with a lower ranking:

– Power issues in the company (FP 7 vs. 3)

They did not mention middle managers at all:

– External image of the company (RP 0 vs. 6)!

These differences in focus of the coaching topics can be interpreted with caution: managers start their careers with personal behavioural and attitudinal topics, then on their way up they come across experiences with leadership under various conditions for which they were usually hardly prepared, further up they come across experiences with politics and power, which are rather frowned upon at the bottom. As a result of an overall perspective on the company that is then brought together at the top, the unavoidable regulation of decision-making conflicts under long-term uncertainty conditions, as well as the direct view of the given market situation and the associated external and internal competition aspects, so top managers tend to have a bundle of strategic as well as political and personnel-related regulation requirements that demand a high tolerance for ambiguity, network activities, assertiveness and the ability to compromise.

Even if the pressure of performance, time, decision-making, responsibility, crises and interpersonal conflicts in the relationship structure associated with top positions trigger a high level of stress. This does not appear to be associated with the same stress and health issues in top management compared to subsequent hierarchical levels in relative terms (cf. Böning & Kegel, 2015; Max, Grundig, Klinik and Heidrick & Struggles, 2014). According to the survey at the Max Grundig Clinic, which is predominantly used by top managers, 50% of managers rate their physical health as good, another 20% even as very good. 24% say satisfactory and 5% say sufficient. Only 2% say bad. When examining mental health, 53.5% of those surveyed rated their condition as good, 32.4% even as very good. Poor or insufficient hardly occurs with 0.9%. Signs of self-doubt about being able to cope with professional challenges, however, were certainly present in 32.3%. And 44.3% occasionally expressed the thought that their work could make them physically or mentally ill. However, it was observed that they try to reduce stress through sport and other activities.

This assessment has led to various interpretations: on the one hand, there is the critical assumption, e.g. by Siegfried Greif (personal communication 2016), that top managers cannot control their autonomous biological reactions any more than other people, and are therefore more likely to ignore (or deny) the problems involved or to attribute them to their private life—and therefore tend to focus less on them in coaching. They sacrifice, so to speak, their lives and the corresponding work-life balance for their professional role. On the other hand, there is a rather positive interpretation and evaluation of the different stress and health sensitivities, as I myself rather represent due to my experience in top management. In top management, against the background of a strong performance orientation, a personally above-average identification with the work, a great readiness to face challenges and stress loads as well as a desire for special opportunities to shape things, the actual stress is rather evaluated as a positive challenge and answered with other coping mechanisms than on the subordinate levels. This includes not only the high material gratifications such as salaries, bonuses and other privileges, but also immaterial gratifications such as a sense of achievement, the social support experienced, the actual power to make decisions and shape events and important status aspects. Not only my own experiences and the results of Buß (2007) go in this direction, but also those of the Europe-wide study by Kivimäki of University College London, whose team underwent a meta-analysis of 13 studies of about 200,000 people from various sectors between 1985 and 2006. The result: people with a high workload and at the same time little freedom of design and few opportunities for further training tend to show striking stress consequences in the form of heart disease (Berres, 2012). The study by Kienbaum, which Hunziger (2004) reported on earlier, also spoke in favour of this interpretation in a differentiated form. In the very heterogeneous sample of managers from large and medium-sized companies from Germany, France, Greece, Austria, Ireland, India, etc., more than 50% complained of sensory disorders (e.g. back and joint pain, sleep disorders and heart stumbling). This was particularly true for managers under 35 years of age in middle management—i.e. not generally for top managers. Rather, the following statement applied to them: 'Top management can [...] act more freely, have more room for manoeuvre and greater self-determination in the position (Scheele, 2003)'. The secondary analysis of 19 companies by Badura et al. in the Absenteeism Report 2015 indirectly supports this view. Badura et al. found: employees had more psychosomatic complaint days compared to managers. An overview of 34 studies by Zimber et al. (2015) on the mental hazard of managers based on five health risks goes in the same direction: mental health and well-being, depressive and psychosomatic symptoms, burnout, irritation and mental stress. With regard to these symptoms, there were inconsistent differences between managers in general and other comparison groups. There were three main protective factors: job security, freedom of action and social support. There are no results on the effects at different management levels.

It is precisely the fact that top managers were not specifically examined in the available studies and that the criteria applied were very different which leaves the questions open as to which of the observations, impressions and conclusions will ultimately be confirmed. Further empirical studies should close the gap here.

The Interventions in Top Management Coaching

In the course of its development as an independent concept, coaching has made use of various philosophical, psychological and psychotherapeutic approaches (including Böning, 2015b; Drath, 2012). These different strands of development as well as the perspectives and traditions behind them lead to the question whether there are methods and tools in coaching that may have a lower chance of success and acceptance in top management. My own long-standing professional experience in coaching with top managers has so far pointed in this direction. Empirical studies on this topic do not seem to be available so far. Experiences of practitioners suggest this could be due to the sometimes strongly experience-oriented or playful character of many approaches in coaching, which are, however, successfully applied to middle and lower managers.

The first descriptive results of a survey (Böning, 2012) conducted on the same sample in the context of my dissertation (Böning, 2015b), provide suggestions for further empirical studies. Top managers indicated feedback as the most frequent (perceived) intervention by coaches, middle managers most frequently use questioning techniques and more frequently than senior and top managers carry out role plays, use of tests, questionnaires and their interpretation as well as offering new perspectives/foreign image/self-image comparison. It is my long experience that role plays are much more reluctantly accepted by top managers than by middle managers. The fact that personality tests are more likely to be rejected also fits into the picture created. No assessment [of the process] possible also showed a connection with the hierarchical level: The higher the level, the less answers were given to the coached interventions. In this respect the interpretation could be correct: For top managers, the observed process was less in the focus of perception—and perhaps of significance—than for other managers.

These indications support the preliminary assumption, supported by observations that top managers tend to attach more importance to rationality and factual work, corporate management and assertiveness as well as self-presentation rhetoric, and therefore prefer clear, structured, analytically and cognitively oriented classical discussion techniques.

Thus, the following hypothesis-leading profile can be outlined, which requires empirical validation:

Top managers

– Are reluctant to undergo psychometric diagnostics, but prefer conversations for the purpose of diagnostics and situation analysis.
– Are looking for analytically polished peers and skilled communicators.
– Prefer coaches who work with an entrepreneurial perspective or a perspective related to the company as a whole.
– Prefer not only empathic partners, but also conflict-prone coaches who can also understand professional issues.
– May misunderstand an empathic mirroring technique.

- Are looking for political and sector-related experts with whom they can safely discuss the political and corporate culture situation in which they find themselves.
- Are often influenced by their role as decision makers and their role experience with classical management consultants—expected not to develop solutions in the coaching process themselves, but to be presented with concrete proposals for a decision, even if these relate to their own emotional reactions, attitudes and behaviour.
- Do not necessarily pick up the coach with extensive (preliminary) information, but expect a prepared and in-depth discussion on which they want to build.

Conclusion

For the coach, this often means getting involved in an approach that sometimes seems paradoxical: In the sense of diagnostics, appreciation and resource activation, on the one hand the coach has to pay attention to measures that gain acceptance (Minuchin, 1997), but on the other hand they also have to use goal-promoting reviews to confrontational interventions that initiate a change of perspective or a new solution. In doing so, a balance must be maintained between process-related and content-related interventions or statements, which, in contrast to the approach of a management consultant, preserve the essential core of the coaching. In addition, personality differences must not only be taken into account in a differential diagnosis, but also important milieu-specific roles and rules must be taken into account in a way that promotes the goal.

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Career Coaching

Simone Kauffeld, Amelie V. Güntner, and Katharina Ebner

Case Study: Career Coaching

Megan, a 29-year-old research assistant, is close to finishing her PhD. She has been thinking about what to do after her PhD for a while but is still uncertain about how to plan her next career steps. Megan is unsure of what her personal strengths are and struggles to identify any significant past achievements. Moreover, she finds it difficult to see how her personal contributions aid a team's wider project goals and successes. When studying for her PhD, she worked very hard and neglected her personal interests and hobbies. She is ambitious and wants to develop professionally, but she also harbors ambitions to start a family within the next few years. She is not sure which of these paths she should prioritize. A former colleague, who was in a similar situation 6 months ago, recommends that Megan takes advantage of the career coaching offered at her university. She agrees that career coaching may indeed be an effective way to reflect on her interests, skills, and career goals and to develop a well-defined career plan.

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Current State of Research on Career Coaching

Relevance of Career Topics in Coaching

In the modern world of work, where traditional careers are becoming increasingly rare and careers increasingly heterogeneous, workers can choose between numerous different career paths and shape their careers highly individually. Although this allows for plenty of scope and variety in professional development, it also places pressure on workers to think carefully about how to plan out their careers and to adapt to sudden and significant changes in their work life (Spurk et al., 2013). Career decisions, after all, are not easy; they must take into account factors as various as personal life goals, preferences, and competencies (Fabio et al., 2013). Furthermore, workers are often not aware of their own wishes, needs, and abilities or struggle to know how to reconcile all these considerations. Therefore, in order to fully understand one's own personal values, motives, and competencies, it is necessary to reflect on them in a structured way. Doing so can lead to making wise career choices which ultimately will have a positive effect on one's life satisfaction and overall well-being (Gessnitzer et al., 2011; Moser & Schmook, 2006).

Concept and Areas of Application of Career Coaching

Career coaching is a specialized coaching method whereby a coach supports a client in defining their career goals and devising strategies to meet those goals (Ebner & Kauffeld, 2018). Specifically, career coaching aims to (a) assess the client's potential for development in terms of their current career situation, career goals, and competencies, (b) increase the client's awareness of opportunities for professional development, challenges, and obstacles, and (c) develop the knowledge and skills necessary to take appropriate career steps (Savickas, 2015). The primary target audience of career coaching includes individuals who are either looking to start a career or being confronted with a transition from one career to another and need support in managing this change. This may include pupils, students, doctoral candidates, and young professionals who are busy finding their career path, as well as established professionals who would like to reinvent themselves, whether for reasons of overload or underload in their current working position or out of interest in new challenges (Kauffeld & Spurk, 2019). Thus, the reasons why individuals opt for career coaching are diverse. Among the most frequent motivations for starting career coaching are work–family conflicts, the desire for a change in one's career based on an analysis of strengths and weaknesses, and the wish to assess and plan possible career steps in the future (Ebner & Kauffeld, 2018; see Box 1).

Box 1 Issues during career coaching (Ebner & Kauffeld, 2018)
- Identifying professional goals
- Shaping and/or realigning one's career
- Supporting career decisions
- Planning next career steps
- Increasing person-job fit
- Reconciling work and private life
- Identifying and reflecting on career-relevant competencies
- Supporting self-marketing (e.g., being able to name own competencies and career goals)
- Increasing job satisfaction

Diagnostics in Career Coaching

Evaluation of the Person-Job Fit

The question of how individuals can be supported in making better career decisions in order to increase their job satisfaction has been examined from numerous different perspectives (Perdrix et al., 2012). One concept that has gained increasing popularity in the field of career research in recent years is the concept of person-job fit (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005). The person-job fit assumes that an individual's performance, satisfaction, and well-being depend on how their personality traits correspond to the nature of the work they carry out (Holland, 1997; Swaney et al., 2012). For example, a good fit between person and job exists when an individual's values, motives, and competencies match the characteristics of his job (Dawis & Lofquist, 1984). Career coaching offers the ideal framework to reflect on and optimize this fit (Gessnitzer et al., 2011).

In order to improve the person-job fit during career coaching, it is important to obtain comprehensive information about the related personal characteristics of the client (Tang, 2003). The importance of this is underlined by research indicating that a person has conflicting personal values, motives, and competencies (Hofer & Chasiotis, 2003; Kehr, 2004). If such inner conflicts remain undetected, they can have a negative effect on an individual's work performance, work–life balance, well-being, and the person-job fit (e.g., Brunstein et al., 1998; Kehr, 2004).

When the goal of a coaching session is to optimize the client's person-job fit, using diagnostic tools, such as psychometrics, can help clients resolve such conflicts (Ebner et al., 2020). Additionally, psychometrics can provide a scientific basis for coaching research and improve its results because it allows making comparisons using standardized measures (Böning & Kegel, 2014). At this point, however, we would like to refer to some of the assessment procedures which, while popular, lack scientific rigor. These include typological tests, such as the DISC/DISC personality

model, the Insights MDI, and the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI), all of which are considered to be diagnostically invalid and to adopt a psychological approach that has little empirical basis (McCrea & Costa, 1989; Pittenger, 1993).

Meanwhile, the concept of career anchors, as proposed by Edgar H. Schein (1996), is a scientifically supported approach for identifying a client's personality. Using the framework of person-job fit, it emphasizes the connection between a person's conception of self and their career decisions. Career anchors reflect aspects of personal values, motives, and attitudes that shape and influence career decisions. They comprise eight clusters of motivational factors (including autonomy and independence as well as professional competence), which are based on Schein's (1996) empirical long-term studies on managerial careers. His research suggests that an awareness of one's own career anchors is helpful in making professional career decisions. The concept of career anchors is elaborated on in the Triadic Career Consulting of Rappe-Giesecke (2008, 2017). There, career anchors are used as a tool to determine career-shaping attitudes and to identify congruent career options. Rappe-Giesecke (2008, 2017) believes that the effectiveness of using this approach during career counselling is determined by first identifying several options for action and then evaluating each of them in terms of their impact on the following three factors: personal biography, career within the company, and professional development.

Unlike the approaches just mentioned, which take into account a range of factors (e.g., personal biography), there are a significant number of alternative methodological approaches that focus on career-relevant characteristics of the client, such as skills and competencies (see the procedure of the competence balance according to Lang-von Wins & Triebel, 2005). For this reason, coaches have for a long time adopted approaches that combine several diagnostic instruments in order to obtain a truly comprehensive picture of the client (Hirschi, 2008).

Assessing Values, Motives, and Competencies in Career Coaching

Gessnitzer et al. (2014) responded to the demand for an empirically based coaching tool that covers important career-relevant client characteristics simultaneously by developing VaMoS. With the help of this tool, it is possible to determine the factors that contribute to client satisfaction (Values), the goals that the client is striving toward (Motives), and their key competencies (Skills). VaMoS not only records the client's individual values, motives, and competencies, but is also the first scientifically validated instrument that tracks and evaluates the relationship between these three factors. Consisting of 123 items, VaMoS records how clients classify theirself on 14 career-relevant dimensions, such as performance orientation, work flexibility, or need for affiliation. The identification of these 14 career-relevant dimensions and development of the associated items was carried out over several steps, including an
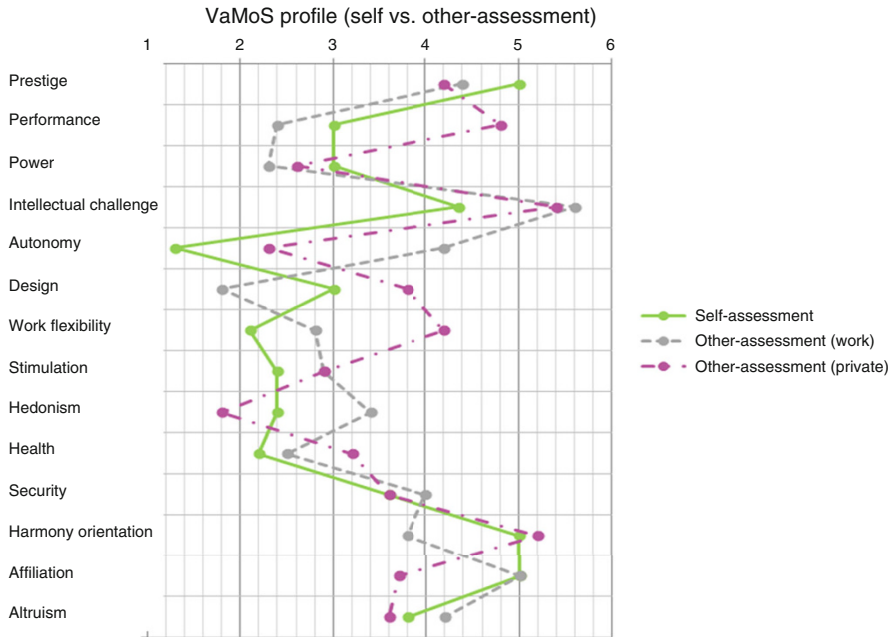
Fig. 1 VaMoS profile representation of self-and other-assessment using the example of the competence facet (Gessnitzer et al., 2014)

extensive literature search, an expert rating by experienced career coaches, and the use of statistical methods to ensure the psychometric quality of the questionnaire (which was shown in two independent studies Gessnitzer et al., 2014). After a client has processed the tool, a personal profile is directly accessible online, which graphically depicts the interrelationships of personal values, motives, and competencies (see Fig. 1). The profile display in VaMoS makes it possible to compare different career-relevant attitudes and competencies and provides data on any incongruities between values, motives, and competencies.

When using VaMoS during career coaching, the first step to work with is to identify and address possible incongruities across values, motives, and competencies. A correlation between the three VaMoS dimensions has a positive effect on the perceived work–life balance, occupational self-efficacy, and satisfaction with career decisions (Gessnitzer et al., 2014). Yet, if the personal VaMoS profile indicates incongruities between competencies, motives, and values, it can be assumed that general life satisfaction, self-efficacy, and satisfaction with career decisions are also at risk (cf. Ebner et al., 2020). In this case, coaching based on the VaMoS profile represents an ideal opportunity to work on reducing these negative effects (Gessnitzer et al., 2014). Carrying out this form of analysis is particularly important for clients who are dissatisfied with their present career path and professional position, as identifying intrapersonal conflicts can indicate whether a client has a poor person-job fit (Gessnitzer et al., 2011). The next step is to encourage the client

to share with their coach any concerns they have regarding their personal career, so that they can resolve the intrapersonal conflict and enhance the person-job fit accordingly.

The use of VaMoS as a diagnostic coaching tool during career coaching enables both, identifying clients' career-relevant values, motives, and competencies, and discrepancies to be addressed both through personal reflection and open discussion with the coach. In order to provide an even more complete picture of the client's career-relevant characteristics, it is possible to even extend the self-assessed values, motives, and skills by inviting third parties from the client's professional and/or private life and generate an additional perspective (Fig. 1).

Career Coaching as Change Support

Adapting to Changing Contextual Conditions During Career Coaching

Given that change is unavoidable in almost all areas of life including the workplace, it would be accurate to say that coaching is synonymous with change management. In line with the evolutionary principle of *survival of the fittest,* it is important for workers to adapt to changing career conditions and to be flexible in their career design (Pohl, 2001). Recent research shows that people with high *career adaptability* (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012) are more satisfied with their careers, perform better in their jobs, and have a greater sense of well-being (e.g., Maggiori et al., 2013; Ohme & Zacher, 2015; Zacher, 2014). To ensure individual adaptation to new or future work conditions, support from a coach can be helpful. This entails the coach supporting their clients in identifying goals and adapting to changed contextual conditions and offering their clients to examine solution ideas and plans for compatibility with individual values, motives, and competencies. In the following section, a career coaching concept with this very objective—adaption to change—will be presented in more detail.

Example of a Career Coaching Concept Supporting Change

The career coaching concept presented here is an example of *coaching as change support*. It was developed within the framework of a university research project by Braumandl and Discherl (2005) and its effectiveness (e.g., in terms of goal attainment) and reliability has been empirically validated (e.g., Biberacher et al., 2011; Ianiro et al., 2013). The career coaching concept for change described here entails a structured coaching process by which career coaches support their clients in starting their careers or adapting to change. It comprises five coaching appointments, which
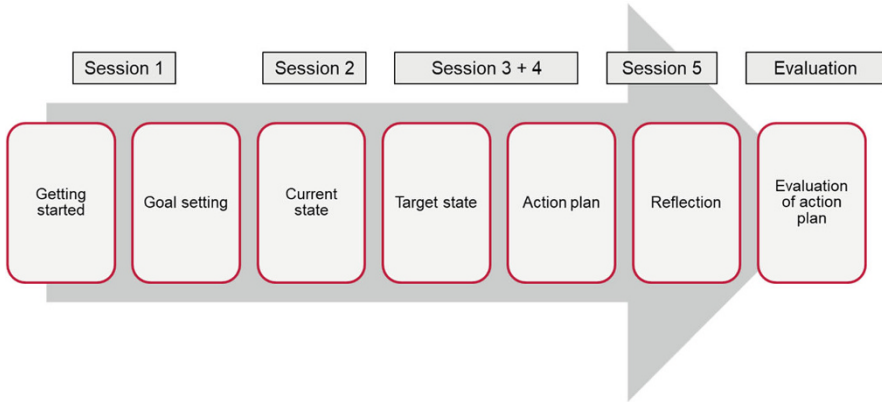
Fig. 2 Process flow in career coaching (according to Braumandl & Discherl, 2005)

take place at intervals of approximately 2–4 weeks and last between 1½ and 3 h. Although the coach–coachee relationship is as individual and personal as in any counseling relationship where significant personal concerns, problems, and desires are shared, the highly structured concept offers space for standardized research and quality assurance.

The following is an ideal-typical course of career coaching, as it would take place with the client Megan described in the case study (Fig. 2): The coaching concept consists of five coaching sessions plus an evaluation session. In the first session, the coach and client become acquainted and the client's concerns are specified. By clarifying the background of the client's goals, as well as by asking questions and identifying attitudes, beliefs, situations, and behaviors related to career-relevant decisions that are perceived as problematic or make it difficult to find feasible solutions, the client's goals become tangible and will be perceived as better achievable. Following the first coaching session, the client completes the VaMoS questionnaire. During the second session, the VaMoS profile (i.e., the current state with regard to self-assessed career-relevant values, motives, and skills) is discussed with the client. This should involve evaluating strengths and weaknesses and addressing discrepancies, such as untapped competencies or conflicting goals and values. In the third session, the client develops a desirable target state with the support of the coach. This involves discussing upcoming career decisions or career-relevant situations (e.g., an appraisal interview) and the associated demands that will be placed on the client, and the coach poses reflective questions in order to work out possible solutions. In order to achieve the target state, the fourth session focuses on how to plan out a set of meaningful but achievable actions that help reaching the clients' goals Client draw up an action plan, which lays out a set of concrete steps that will help to achieve the goals. The fifth and final session consists of a reflection on the overall coaching process. This entails clarifying the progression status of the targets, deciding which aspects of the process were helpful and which were not, and whether there are any remaining concerns still to be resolved. Ideally, even after the coaching

is over, the client continues to work toward the goals set up in their action plan. If required by the client, there is also the option of an evaluation session approximately 3–4 months after the fifth session. This interview, which can be conducted either in person or by telephone, should serve to discuss the action plan and clarify how the plan can be adapted to context conditions that might have changed in the meantime. Beyond the transfer discussion, the coach and client can restart the process and arrange further meetings following the same structure as the initial process adapted to the client's new needs, where the client reflects on the implementation of their first action plan and drafts a new one accordingly. From this, further targets or further measures for achieving the targets can be devised.

Following this approach and structure, it is important that the coach is aware of several factors determining its success, both on the relationship level and on the process level. On the one hand, it is important that trust is established between coach and client and that the client feels comfortable with and understood by the coach so that they are willing to open up to them (e.g., Graßmann & Schermuly, 2020). This is made possible, for example, by the coach developing a comprehensive picture of the client's values, motives, and competencies and sensitively adapting their process-moderating behavior to the client. Running in direct conflict with these personal considerations, however, the coach must consider the practicalities of process planning, (i.e., that coach and client are only able to meet for a limited time, in this case, the five coaching sessions). VaMoS (Gessnitzer et al., 2014), though, is suitable for reconciling the two aspects of relationship design and process planning in coaching. On the one hand, VaMoS makes it possible to paint a comprehensive picture of the client that fully considers the potential inner conflicts of a client. On the other hand, this approach helps the coach to structure the conversation during the sessions and to shape the overall process.

This particular career coaching concept has been proven to be effective to support change by carrying out evaluations for both students and junior scientists. Intervention studies (e.g., within the framework of the *ProNet* project at the Technical University of Braunschweig) also allow us to record the most common concerns that clients shared with their coaches. These included career planning, analysis of strengths and weaknesses, work–life balance, and optimization of communication behavior (see Table 1). In a study, by Spurk et al. (2015), the authors evaluated the effectiveness of this career coaching approach by means of a pre-post comparison: The authors show that the study participants who took part in a networking training course alongside career coaching showed increased motivation with regard to their career planning and an increase in career optimism. Furthermore, the evaluation results indicated that an increase in career planning activities and career optimism was accompanied by an increase in subjective career success. Individuals who participated in the networking training but did not receive career coaching, however, failed to show this positive effect highlighting the significant improvements attainable during career coaching.

Table 1 Issues with which doctoral candidates seeking career coaching

Subject	Sample question
Career planning	Do I stay at university or do I change to industry?
Analysis of strengths and weaknesses	How can I work on my weaknesses? What can I do for a living with what I know?
Work-life balance	How do I deal with stress? What kind of job allows me to start a family?
Optimize communication behavior	How do I make contacts quickly at congresses? How do I express myself clearly and concisely in (conflict) discussions?
Confident appearance/management behavior	How do I behave as a manager? How do I achieve a confident appearance with cooperation partners in job interviews?
Support in the application process	How do I apply after my doctorate? How do I optimize my application?

Process Characteristics of Effective Change Support Through Career Coaching

The effectiveness of career coaching is supported by an abundance of research that lays out the criteria for success and explains how career coaching meets that criteria. In general, career coaching success criteria equal the typical concerns of clients, that is, finding work–life balance, setting and achieving career goals and job satisfaction and many more (cf. Barthauer et al., 2016). Thereby, current research on career coaching points out that career coaching is successful if goals are formulated by the client whereas career goals that are proposed by the coach will have a negative impact on the career coaching process (Gessnitzer & Kauffeld, 2015). This finding emphasizes the active role assigned to the client in coaching, and implies that the coach should only take on a supporting, process-accompanying function (Grant et al., 2009). Further, a recently developed model for career coaching processes suggests that working on clients' career identity (i.e., self-clarity and career-goal clarity), as supported by psychometrics such as VaMoS, are essential prerequisites to develop career optimism and find security in shaping careers (Ebner, 2020). Finally, since the goal of career coaching is to develop the persuasion of being able to find and realize solutions to career concerns, any career coaching process should comprise methods and measures through which the client can relate achieved change to themselves; the more competent the client feels, the more likely they are to actively and independently implement effective measures in their future career planning and find the way into satisfying careers (Spence & Grant, 2007).

Conclusion

Career coaching aims to support clients in answering questions such as "What career goals should I pursue?" and "How do I shape my career in such a way that my personal values are fulfilled and I can fully contribute my skills?"

In today's world with its rapidly changing technologies, unstable organizational life and the freedom of choices coupled with limited geographical boundaries, individuals have plenty of career opportunities to choose from. Hence, individuals today are increasingly required to make career-relevant decisions and to actively shape and manage their careers. Since the responsibility for one's own career progress is increasingly placed on the employees theirself, they are also the one who must constantly sharpen the view for new career perspectives (Spurk et al., 2013).

Individuals can seek career coaching with different concerns at different points in their employment biography. Whether it is a student who is about to finish their studies and is uncertain about the direction of their career entry, or an individual with many years of work experience who is dissatisfied with their current job and wants to improve their job-person-fit while looking for a new job. Equally various are the factors that help individuals make sound career decisions. Accordingly, it is important to point out that career coaching describes a highly personalized process, which must simultaneously be grounded in a reliable structure. The use of psychometric tools can be helpful in achieving this balance.

The influence that diagnostic instruments have on career coaching has not yet been investigated to a sufficient extent (Ebner et al., 2020). Open questions that arise at this point include "What effect does the use of diagnostic tools in career coaching have on improving the person-job-fit?" and "How does the use of diagnostic tools change the coaching process and specifically influence the coach-client interaction?" In this respect, research on (career) coaching may further benefit from using video-based instruments that allow for the observation and identification of actual behaviors by coaches and clients (e.g., Ianiro & Kauffeld, 2018; Klonek et al., 2016). Using these kinds of assessment tools may for example give insights into the coaching methods that help resolve the client's ambivalence toward career-related change (Klonek et al., 2019).

In addition, research on the impact of career coaching on career development requires a specialized research design and unique evaluation methods. For example, longitudinal studies are needed to measure the success of long-term goals, which are typically set during the course of career coaching (Savickas, 2002). A prerequisite for this is that data on careers and career success are collected over longer periods of time, which is an additional demand on the researcher.

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Coaching in the Context of Organizational Change

Katrin Bickerich and Alexandra Michel

Introduction

> I know something about not knowing and accompany my client into not knowing (this is a quote taken from an interviewed coach in a qualitative study conducted by the authors).

Economic activity today takes place under high uncertainty (Strikker & Strikker, 2011) and managers and employees are increasingly in demand in "dealing with not knowing." Change management activities, also known as "permanent reorganisation" (Kriegesmann & Kley, 2014, p. 106), are part of the daily agenda in many large companies. Headlines in the media reflect this process of constant change. Accordingly, change and management competence as a corporate success factor is becoming more and more important and is increasingly finding its way into the daily tasks of managers (Armenakis & Harri, 2009). Change processes place complex demands on organizations (Herrmann et al., 2012), their managers, and employees. Often it is not possible to master them. An estimated 70% of all change projects are not successfully implemented (Cartwright & Hudson, 2000). In addition, change processes in organizations can impair not only performance but also employees' well-being and health (for a research overview, see Michel & Morales-Gonzalez, 2013). Kriegesmann and Kley (2014) examined in a study stress perception and exhaustion state of 133 managers during change processes in large German companies. They highlight "depending on many stakeholders" or "delayed project timelines" as stress factors. The study concluded that 51% of the study participants experienced moderate and 23% severe exhaustion. Managers differed in their reactions on their perceived degree of participation and autonomy: managers who were passively affected by the change or the "change managers" have a higher risk for vital exhaustion than the "architects of change" mainly providing strategic

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directions and tending to stay away from the operational business of "selling the change." Michel and Morales-Gonzalez (2013) describe fears and depression as further health-impairing consequences that can occur during change processes. These in turn can lead to reduced confidence in management, lower job satisfaction, withdrawal behavior, loss of performance, and higher absenteeism, as well as intentions to quit and ultimately to leave the organization. There are also risks of loss of trust and identification with the company as well as growing change cynicism (Kriegesmann & Kley, 2014). To support managers in these tasks, coaching is increasingly used as a personnel development tool during change processes (Eichler, 2011).

In this chapter, we firstly show that the challenge of dealing with change processes can be a relevant indicator for coaching. We have adopted the theoretical framework of the "Job Demands-Resources" model (Demerouti et al., 2001) to the coaching context and explain why change-related coaching can be a job resource in this context. We will review the current state of research, and offer practical recommendations for the design of change coaching processes. The chapter ends with a conclusion and directions for future research.

Dealing with Change Processes: A Relevant Indicator for Coaching?

In the third Marburg Coaching Study (Stephan & Gross, 2013) 720 business coaches indicated 27 different coaching-relevant topics. 5.9% of the coaches rated the topic "support of innovation processes" to be relevant for coaching with "very often," 19.2% with "often" and 23.3% with "occasionally." In addition, relating to the study results other coaching-relevant topics were also related to change processes, i.e., reflection on strategy development, development of visions, reduction of complexity, change of position, or role development. The study revealed that coaching is widely used in all phases of change processes or as a support for entire innovation processes.

Furthermore, Bickerich and Michel (2012) showed in a qualitative study that coaching is a suitable development measure to support managers in change processes. Within the scope of their study, they conducted 33 expert interviews with 18 coaches, as well as 15 executives and project managers of middle management levels, who were active in different industries and had to deal with various change processes. 14 of the 15 managers interviewed stated they see coaching as a helpful support instrument and 9 expressed concrete coaching needs. One of the coaches interviewed said: "coaching is required when, in the context of these organizational changes, one's own personal role changes or develops in such a way that previous experience, skills and commitment are no longer sufficient to cope with the new expectations."

Based on these interview results, the challenges that change processes pose to middle management can be illustrated using three clusters:

1. Change management includes the requirement to competently implement the change vision and to master process control, taking into account corporate policy aspects (e.g., conflicts of interest) and organizational culture.
2. Change leadership describes team leadership with the focus on communicating the change project as well as handling emotional reactions, resistance, or conflicts among employees.
3. Self-management includes personal time and complexity management in the case of several simultaneous change processes as well as identification with the change project.

What Does Change-Specific Coaching Mean?

According to Bickerich and Michel (2013), it is the goal of change coaching to support managers in mastering organizational change processes in a solution- and resource-oriented way, in giving their employees a better understanding of the ongoing change and in managing the change effectively. Coaching during change processes takes the personal responsibility of the clients into account, against the background of their personality as well as the corporate culture and organizational structures (Bickerich & Michel, 2013, p. 444). In coaching, it is essential to clarify whether the client wants to share the responsibility for the organizational change and its consequences in his leadership role. Therefore, the development of change competence, the handling of complexity, emotions, dilemmas, and resistance (Landes & Steiner, 2014), questions of identity (Schreyögg, 2009) as well as the interaction between individual goals and new organizational structures are the focus of the coaching (Bickerich & Michel, 2016a). Depending on the function and hierarchical level of the executive, this may concern strategy development or the implementation of the change project as well as the clarification of role and positioning issues.

The "Job Demands-Resources" Model as a Theoretical Framework

According to the "Job Demands-Resources" model (JD-R model, Demerouti et al., 2001) job demands (i.e., work complexity and intensity) can take up the energy of employees and managers. Change processes often imply numerous job demands which are likely to be experienced as burdensome, for example, due to high time pressure, increasing complexity, and unclear responsibilities. In contrast job resources (i.e., autonomy and organizational support) can promote personal growth
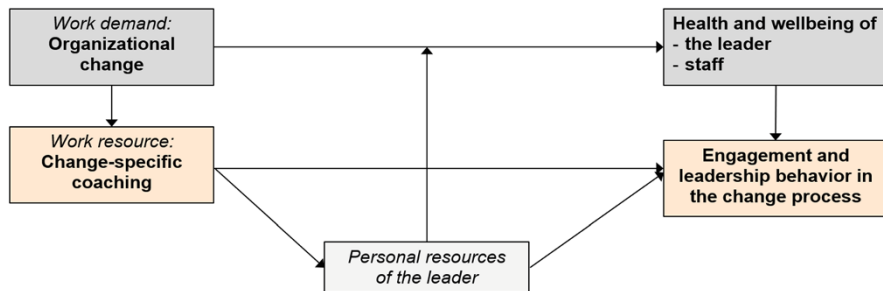
Fig. 1 Model: Effects of change-specific coaching (from Bickerich & Michel, 2013, p. 440)

and the achievement of professional goals. Since coaching aims to support the development of managers' professional, social and personal competencies, coaching can be classified as a job resource (cf. Bickerich & Michel, 2013). The JD-R model postulates two mechanisms: (1) High job demands can increase the risk of burnout and other health and well-being impairments. (2) Job resources can initiate motivational processes promoting work engagement. Furthermore, job resources can stimulate personal resources (e.g., optimism), which in turn can buffer the relation between job demands and impaired health and well-being (Xanthopoulou et al., 2007). Transferring the assumptions of the JD-R model to the context of change-specific coaching, we assume that during organizational change coaching as a job resource can support motivational processes and can buffer negative consequences due to increased job demands. Figure 1 shows the postulated model of the effects of change-specific coaching (see Bickerich & Michel, 2013, p. 440).

Research Overview: Evaluation of Change-Specific Coaching

Meta-analyses (Jones et al., 2016; Theeboom et al., 2014; see the state of coaching research, Kotte et al. in this handbook) show positive coaching effects. Theeboom et al. (2014) analyze in their meta-analysis 18 coaching studies in an organizational or educational context. Results show positive coaching effects on performance/skills, well-being, coping behavior, and goal-oriented self-regulation as well as attitudes toward work. The meta-analysis by Jones et al. (2016) comprising 17 studies concludes that coaching has a positive effect on emotions, abilities/competencies, and performance criteria such as goal achievement. Even though the general effectiveness of coaching seems to be confirmed by meta-analytical results, there is a lack of research evaluating change-specific coaching effects in German-speaking, Anglo-American, and other countries. Only a few studies have been published, described below.

In a longitudinal study, Bickerich and Michel (2016b) interviewed 66 middle management executives during ongoing organizational change processes at three measurement points. The aim of this quantitative study applying a

quasi-experimental control group design was to evaluate the effects of change-specific coaching, thereby taking other job resources into account. Results reveal that managers participating in change-specific coaching reported higher levels of professional self-efficacy expectations, leadership behavior, and positive affect after 6 months, as well as lower negative affect, when they had a high level of autonomy or management support, compared to managers without coaching.

Grant (2014) examined the effectiveness of a coaching program for managers during organizational change. Thirty-one executives from a global engineering consulting organization in 14 cities in the USA, United Kingdom, Asia, and Australia attended the coaching. Coaching effectiveness was evaluated with a pre-post design with 4-month intervals using qualitative and quantitative methods. Participation in the coaching program led to increased goal achievement, resilience, willingness to change, self-efficacy, and problem-focused thinking. Furthermore, a reduced depression rate was found after the coaching, while anxiety and stress did not decrease. The evaluation of the qualitative data also revealed improvements outside work. Fifteen participants reported a better work–life balance and seven a better relationship with their families.

Kombarakaran et al. (2008) examined a coaching program for 114 managers of a multinational company after an acquisition. The coaching objectives were (1) to build strengths, (2) to improve cooperation between managers and employees, and (3) to develop managers' coaching skills. A self-developed evaluation tool was used to assess the following coaching effectiveness criteria: leading people, goal and priority setting, commitment, and productivity as well as more efficient communication. Although study results support the effectiveness of change-specific coaching, results need to be interpreted with caution because only cross-sectional data could be selected.

Similarly, Grant et al. (2009) showed in an Australian study using a randomized control group design that coaching (with a solution-oriented cognitive-behavioral orientation) can improve the management of organizational restructuring. Analyzing qualitative data the authors show coaching effects on goal attainment, resilience and well-being at work, change management. Twenty-three statements in a group of 39 participants suggest that participants seem to be better able to deal with organizational change after participating in the coaching.

Bickerich, Michel & O'Shea (2017) conducted a qualitative interview study with the aim to explore change-coaching processes as perceived by executives and coaches. Middle management executives and coaches were interviewed about their organizational change experience and the use of coaching as a developmental tool supporting executives when managing organizational change processes. Analysis results revealed distinct coaching perceptions across the coaching process stages: pre-coaching (phase 1), during coaching (phase 2), and post-coaching (phase 3). With reference to the pre-coaching phase, executives described both their change-related demands and that coaching could support them in meeting their goals. This motivated them to engage in coaching. In phase 2, during coaching, executives' expected the coaching to focus on their change reactions and their leadership behavior. Looking at the post-coaching phase executives anticipated different

outcomes of the change-coaching process. Organizational outcomes referred to the implementation of strategic decisions regarding change, social outcomes included the management of others through the change process. Coaches described their role in supporting executives in their self-management, i.e., in developing behaviors as well as coping skills to manage the change. Based on these findings, the authors developed a conceptual model of change-coaching across the three phases (Fig. 2).

Change-Specific Coaching: Practical Recommendations

In the following section, we describe practical recommendations relating to three change-specific coaching aspects: (1) the design of change-specific coaching processes, (2) the assessment of clients' change-specific coaching needs, and (3) key competences of coach in the context of organizational change.

Design of Change-Specific Coaching Processes

Based on different coaching studies (e.g., Grant, 2014; Kombarakaran et al., 2008; Michel & Bickerich, 2016) and the results of our own interview study the following topics should be addressed in change-specific coaching processes:

1. Change Management: Building a bridge between the individual and the organization. One aspect of change-specific coaching relates to the integration of possibly conflicting individual goals of the manager and organizational goals in the change process (Eichler, 2011; Hausherr Fischer et al., 2013). The coach faces the challenge to consider the different phases during a change process, the organizational context, relevant stakeholders and the managers' own goal and role conflicts (Bickerich & Michel, 2013). Some managers also expect coaches supporting them in building change management competence and teaching them change process management techniques. In our interview study one coach said:

   > ... there is also the complexity to be considered and personal decisions have to be made, not only with regard to one's own development but also with regard to organizational development.

2. Change Leadership: Promoting managers' role identity. In change-specific coaching, managers should be supported in their leadership role, especially in the way they deal with employee's reactions and emotions (Bickerich & Michel, 2013). Identifying typical emotional patterns during change processes can be helpful for successful change communication (Hausherr Fischer et al., 2013). In addition, a study by Groves (2006) showed that managers with high emotional competence were perceived as visionary role models by their employees.
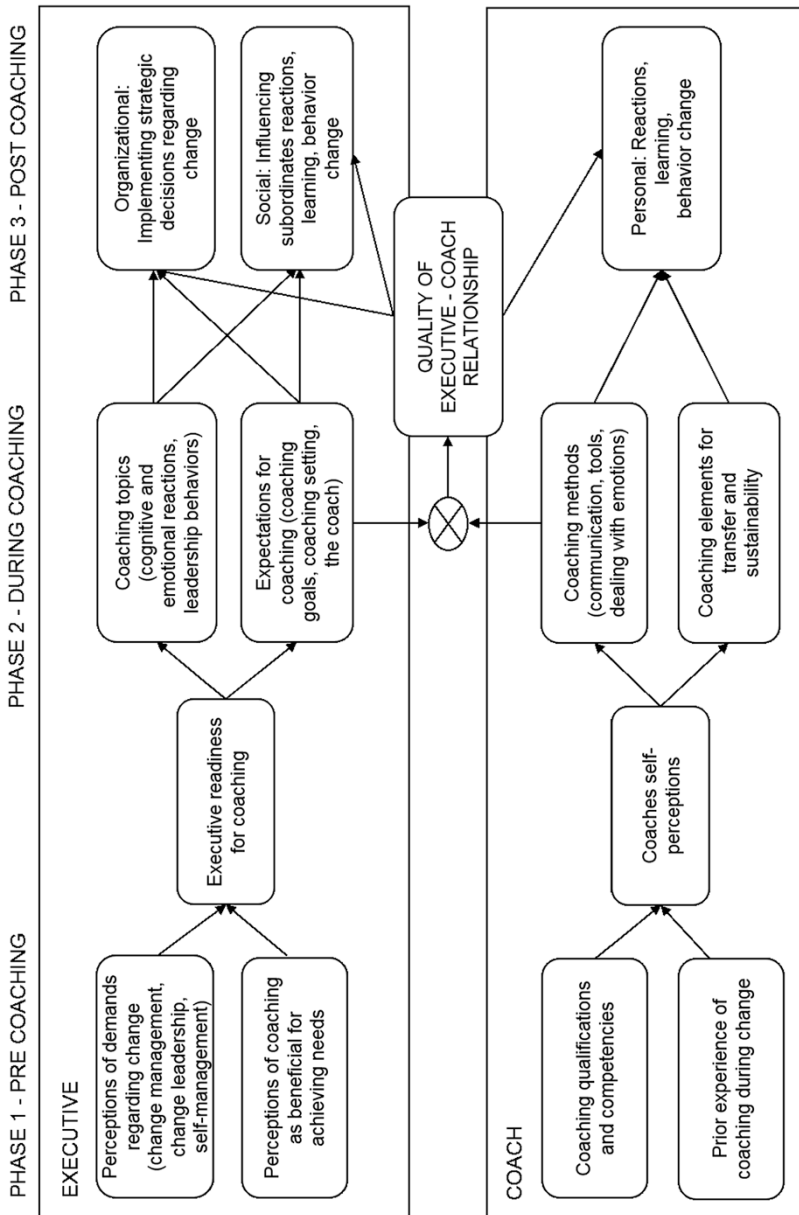
Fig. 2 Adopted Model: The Change-Coaching (C-C) Model from executives and coaches perspectives (from Bickerich et al., 2017, p. 11)

However, a visionary management style alone was not sufficient for the successful implementation of organizational changes. In addition, managers should be highly committed to the change project as well as sensitive to employees' emotions. One coach in our interview study described:

> ... be aware of your own leadership position. This is very important in change processes, also to observe oneself, e.g. with regard to the motivation of others and employees.

3. Self-Management: Conveying emotional clarity and coping strategies to prevent exhaustion. The third central change-specific coaching topic is how managers deal with high complexity, information overload, and time pressure in change projects as well as possible (emotional) stress reactions. Especially for managers with a high tendency toward overcommitment, i.e., an extreme willingness to make an effort combined with the desire for recognition (Kriegesmann & Kley, 2014), it is important to learn coping mechanisms to prevent exhaustion symptoms in change coaching. Another change-specific coaching topic is the managers' personal fit (e.g., own values and competencies) with the changing organization (organizational values and tasks/demands), which might be challenged. This could lead to identity rebuilding (Schreyögg, 2011) and the adaptation of one's own values and competences in relation to the changing organization (Person-Environment-Fit, O'Reilly et al., 1991). One coach in our interview study said:

> ... I have to ask myself the question and I do, why we have so many mentally ill people with burn-out and why it is getting more and more. Why are people suddenly not able to withstand this deluge?

Assessment of Clients' Change-Specific Coaching Needs

Change-specific coaching needs could, for example, be discussed between HR managers and executives or employees. Coaching is a cost- and time-intensive personal development instrument. Thus, change-specific coaching needs and a possible coaching participation could be reflected using the following three guiding questions (see Michel & Bickerich, 2016): (1) Is coaching the right measure to accompany the manager in the change process? (2) Which focus should the change-specific coaching have? (3) Which coach could be a "best fit" and address the clients' needs? A measurement tool determining the concrete coaching needs is currently being validated (see Michel & Bickerich, 2016). The Need-for-Coaching Scale enables a standardized needs analysis and contains subscales such as team and employee leadership, self-presentation in the company, burnout prevention, change of position or tasks, or change management, which can be related to change-specific coaching topics (e.g., items see Table 1).

Table 1 Overview of the subscales (selection) of the Need for Coaching scale

Coaching needs	Example items
Team and employee leadership	"I would like to take advantage of coaching to optimize my leadership qualities."
Self-presentation in the organization	"In a coaching I would like to learn strategies to better sell my own agenda within in the organizational political context."
Burnout prevention	"I am often overworked and would like to learn in a coaching how to set meaningful limits."
Change of position or tasks	"I would like to prepare my promotion in a coaching."
Change management	"My team reacts with resistance to decided changes, I would like to have the support of a coach in order to deal with them successfully."

Key Competencies of a Coach in the Context of Organizational Change

Up to now, human resources managers in organizations have often relied on personal recommendations and their own intuition when selecting coaches (Schumann, 2014). Competency models describing the required knowledge and skills of coaches can help to optimize the coach selection process. The Heidelberg Competency Model for executive coaches (Michel et al., 2014) can be used for coach selection. On its basis, structured selection interviews or questionnaires can be developed (Michel et al., 2014). The model is based on the concept of professional action competence (Sonntag & Schaper, 2016). In this model professional competence, methodological competence, social competence, and self- and personal competence are distinguished. Based on the Heidelberg Competence Model, our literature review and our own interview study, coaches working in the context of organizational change should have the following competencies:

Professional competence: (experiential) knowledge of change processes in organizations, such as knowledge of relevant contextual conditions, typical course dynamics, and possible employees' and managers' reactions and change-related leadership behavior.

Social competence: Designing the interaction and communication between coach and client in a way that both the client's individual needs as well organizational demands are reflected.

Method Competence: Taking the organizational system with relevant stakeholders, networks, and culture into account and teaching change management techniques.

Self- and personal competencies: Dealing with own emotions which can be triggered by the client's stress reactions.

Conclusion

Change coaching can be demanding and thus a coach should have different coaching competencies (Klaffke, 2011). During organizational change managers need change management skills, social competence for communication, and dealing with employees' change reactions in a possibly conflicting organizational environment. Until now there is still a lack of research on the effects of change-specific coaching. Thus, future research should address the following questions:

1. Which competencies do coaches need and which methods and techniques should they use to support their clients in the best possible way? How can coaches address the heterogeneity of change processes and variety of job demands going along with organizational change-specific coaching?
2. How influences support by supervisors, colleagues, and the organization as well as workplace design the transfer from coaching learning experiences to managers' daily work?

Future research should on change-specific coaching should improve research designs by conducting longitudinal studies with (randomized-)control group designs and several measurement points. Thereby, coaching effectiveness should be rated from multiple perspectives (e.g., client, supervisor, colleagues, and coach).

To derive scientifically based practical recommendations, it is not only desirable but also necessary that Human Resource managers, coaches and their clients, coaching associations, and training institutes participate in scientific studies.

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Coaching for Sustainability

Joel A. DiGirolamo

Introduction

Our planet is in crisis. A remote town in Siberia has reached a high temperature of 38 °C (Devitt & Balmforth, 2020). The Antarctic is melting (Jones, 2019). The Greenland ice shelf is melting (Amos, 2020). Fires are raging on multiple continents (Gray, 2019). A newly emergent virus has caused a pandemic (World Health Organization, 2020). Carbon dioxide in our atmosphere and the average air temperature rise unabated (Earth Science Communications Team, 2020a, b). Fascism has once again reared its ugly head (Albright, 2018). This is no doomsday horror movie. It is life on planet Earth in the year 2020.

Coaching, along with facilitation can move us collectively toward a brighter future. Individual coaching, team coaching, and the facilitation of dialog help bring deeper understanding amongst all of us—no matter where we are physically located, our culture of origin, or our values and beliefs.

Sustainability and Leadership

Howard T. Odum (1971), in his seminal book *Environment, Power, and Society* illustrated the multiplicity of interconnected complex systems on our planet. Lenton et al. (2019) describe a number of tipping points across the globe, and the potential for individual tipping points to cascade, with catastrophic results. Since these systems frequently respond in a nonlinear manner, "even a minor perturbation can

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push them over a tipping point" (Scheffer, 2009, Chap. 1, para. 1). These shifts can be both surprising and sudden.

As scenarios predicted decades ago (Kothavala, 1997) play out, we continue to question whether the current threats, climate change, and social unrest are existential or just a phase of our civilization that we must work through.

Leadership has evolved over the millennia from alpha male dominance (Wrangham & Peterson, 1996) to the hunter-gatherer leader (Knauft, 1991), through early communal leaders with the advent of agriculture (Knauft, 1991), to the industrial manager (Mintzberg, 1973), to our current conceptualization of a leader (Wielkiewicz & Stelzner, 2005). Bringing in an ecological perspective, Wielkiewicz and Stelzner (2005) propose that "specific leaders are less important than they appear because the ecological context is more important than what leaders decide to do" (p. 326). In other words, the system is more important and powerful than the leader—it must always be considered and adapted to. In a nod to this paradigm, Bennis (2004) and Meijerink and Stiller (2013) describe the importance of what they call "adaptive capacity":

> When we compared older and younger leaders for Geeks and Geezers, we found that the ruling quality of leaders, adaptive capacity, is what allows true leaders to make the nimble decisions that bring success. Adaptive capacity is also what allows some people to transcend the setbacks and losses that come with age and to reinvent themselves again and again. (Bennis, 2004, para. 40)

Future Shock by Alvin Toffler (1970) put into words the sentiment of the early 1970s that change was happening at too rapid a pace for humans to handle. Since then the pace of change has only increased. Sociologist Anthony Giddens has promoted the idea that we, as humans, respond reflexively to changes in our world—that our environment or context has an impact on us.

> Modernity is a post-traditional order, in which the question, "How shall I live?" has to be answered in day-to-day decisions about how to behave, what to wear and what to eat—and many other things—as well as interpreted within the temporal unfolding of self-identity. (1991, p. 14)

The pivotal year of 2020 has shown that Mother Nature is fully in charge. For our species to survive, all inhabitants and leaders, especially, will need to consider the greater systems at work. Through coaching, individuals and leaders can learn what must change, how that change will work within the current systems, and most importantly how that change might need to transform and adapt once again to meet future needs.

Coaching Is an Effective Modality to Promote Change

Coaching has been shown to be an effective modality to promote insight and change (Jones et al., 2016; Theeboom et al., 2014) with the idea that the change should be sustained over time (Koroleva, 2016; Nowack, 2009). Professional coaching

organizations include such elements in their coaching competency models. The European Mentoring and Coaching Council (EMCC) coaching model contains "Enabling insight and learning" (2015) whereas the International Coaching Federation (ICF) model includes "Evoking awareness" (2019).

The client context is also an important consideration in coaching, as seen by the inclusion of this element in each coaching association's competency model: "Encourages client to explore wider context and impact of desired outcomes" (EMCC, 2015, p. 11) and "Remains aware of and open to the influence of context and culture on self and others" (ICF, 2019, para. 2).

The idea that change should be sustained is good—until that change is no longer useful. Given the highly transient nature of our current world, it is questionable as to whether any change should be sustained unless the change promotes greater flexibility or adaptability. Otherwise, for any sustained change to remain viable and effective implies that the context is static, which we know is not true.

Coming back to Giddens (1991) and reflexivity, he states, "Modernity's reflexivity refers to the susceptibility of most aspects of social activity, and material relations with nature, to chronic revision in the light of new information or knowledge" (p. 20), which brings us to his notion of "self-identity." This idea of self-identity implies that the individual must remain persistently reflexive and continually renewing the self-identity. Stelter (2009) brings the idea of reflexivity and self-identity into the context of coaching and expands these concepts into the notion of reflective practice. A detailed model of reflective practice has been developed by Hullinger et al. (2019) for personal and professional growth. While this model was focused on enhancing self-regulation, the concepts in that model are applicable to enhanced adaptability and growth in general, especially in the context of coaching.

Models of Behavior Change

Unfortunately, belief in climate change has been politicized in some countries and can be based upon values. Corner et al. (2014) write:

> Firstly, the degree of political polarization that has developed around climate change (in some Western countries, at least) reflects the fact that disagreements about climate change are more likely to be about values than about the underlying science—even though the science is often used as a proxy for these values-based disputes. (Corner et al., 2014, p. 418)

As such, working with coaching clients to bring in the paradigm of sustainability can be difficult at times, given that it may conflict with specific values, beliefs, or attitudes. However, consistent with the theory of planned behavior (Ajzen, 1991) a study by Bamberg et al. (2003) showed that humans can respond to cognitive input to change behavior. In the theory of planned behavior, Ajzen (1991) purports that subjective norms, attitudes toward a behavior, and perceived behavioral control can influence each other and the intention toward that behavior. Subsequently, that

Fig. 1 Cascade model of personality elements

Traits & Needs

↓

Values & Beliefs

↓

Attitudes & Interests
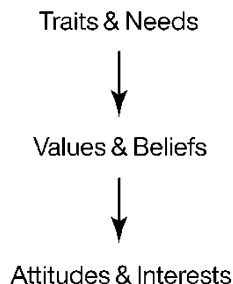
intention, along with the perceived behavioral control can bring about the actual behavior.

Hogan and Sherman (2019) have looked at what drives behavior through another lens—the role of traits, needs, values, beliefs, attitudes, and interests. It is beneficial to also consider a theory of how these latter elements may fit together and provide insight into human thought processes and behavior in the context of coaching and sustainability.

Imagine two possible coaching clients named Connie and Libby, who both have the trait or need to nurture. Traits are general and enduring, while needs can guide behavior (Allport, 1937). Connie has the value of protecting her current lifestyle and culture in her country, with the belief that they currently have a well-honed, orderly system that should be maintained. On the other hand, Libby is looking more broadly, at cultures across the globe, and values the long-term effects of climate change on many of these cultures. Her belief is that we must nurture our planet in order to take care of the people. Connie has an attitude that we must take care of our community first and has an interest in local community activities. Libby's attitude is that we should all become knowledgeable and aware of the impact our human activities have on the planet and is interested in promoting activities and behaviors that will protect our planet. We can see from this example how a common trait or need can play out with dramatically different attitudes, interests, and behaviors. Figure 1 illustrates the cascade of these elements.

An obvious connection between the theory of planned behavior and the cascade model is the idea that attitudes can drive behavior. The cascade model, while simpler than the theory of planned behavior, actually expands on it to some extent by moving deeper—into values, beliefs, traits, and needs. In a consumer study, Thøresen and Ölander (2002) determined empirically that values can drive behaviors, at least for the short and medium term.

Corner et al. (2014) suggest reframing climate change as a public health issue to get through to the skeptics. This is moving up that chain illustrated in Fig. 1. Envision a scenario in which a coach is working with a middle-aged oil company executive client. The client is married with two early teenage daughters and has always focused on working hard to achieve financial stability for his family. His attitude is that everyone should work hard, with a belief that if you work hard in an organization, you will be rewarded with promotions and challenging assignments.

The client is in the process of making a transition to a new position with more responsibility and is working through what should be priorities to be poised for success. The coach reviews the client's goals with them, one of which is to provide for their family. The client reiterates how the new position will enhance financial security. The coach asks the question, "Is financial security sufficient to provide for your family long-term?" The client mulls this over for a minute and responds that with sufficient funds their children will be able to get a good education and place to live. Seeing an opening to a higher-level need, the coach asks, "So is there a broader need for your children?" Again, a pause, and the client slowly replies, "Yes, I guess there is. I guess I want my children and their children to have happy lives and that might require more than just money." With this new insight, the client and coach can work together to develop broader goals and steps to achieve some of those goals.

Returning to the modality of coaching as a facilitator of change, a steady reflective practice can promote learning and growth, which is essential to positive outcomes. The Hullinger et al. reflective practice model (2019) can be important in helping the client to break down elements of the current issue and steps to take action toward their goals. This may be especially important given the findings of Langenbach et al. (2020) that working memory may be a moderator of the relationship between pro-environmental attitudes and actual behaviors toward those ends.

Coaching for Sustainability

Sustainability, as a general term, means that all elements and systems are working in harmony to maintain an ecological balance. This might be anywhere along a spectrum from an atomic level to a global one. Thus, a broad scope must be considered, no matter the issue.

This brings us to the concept of context. All coaching clients operate within a given context, whether at a micro level or macro level. At the micro, or internal level, we can look at what is going on inside the client, that is, the totality of their personality, experiences, motivations, education, and training. At the macro, or external level clients may be cognizant and reacting to what is happening in their immediate vicinity, family, organization, culture, or across the globe.

Context is an important element in coaching since it acts as raw material in the coaching process. No matter what issue the client comes to coaching with, it has arisen from their context. Perhaps the client wishes to modify their behavior in a certain way. This behavior might be a result of a personality trait, or a learned behavior.

Context, however, is also a mediator of coaching outcomes since the client's context can either inhibit or promote the desired change. For example, suppose that a coaching client is a manager of a department of programmers. The manager is wanting to learn how to empower the team members and explores this with their coach. After several coaching sessions, the client begins to work in between them to execute small steps in this direction. The manager is facing resistance from their

supervisor and is ultimately told to stop these efforts. And so, the external context within which the client is operating has prevented them from moving forward in the desired direction. Conversely, the supervisor could have observed the new behaviors and provided positive feedback on them.

But these are examples where the context is acting upon the client and in reality, there is frequently a two-way interaction, where the context may act upon the client and the client can also influence the context. It is this latter concept that is important if we are to bring the client to greater awareness in regard to their actions as they relate to sustainability.

Many people talk about resilience, which is recovering from something. Perhaps it is better to go beyond just recovering and instead of adapting to whatever is new and then thriving within this new system. Given the current pace of change, this may mean adapting to the (new) present state but also planning for multiple possible future scenarios and how actions and behaviors may influence the outcome from those scenarios.

Following this line of thinking, one can easily imagine neurotic clients continually adapting to multiple perturbations in their systems. And so, there must be a balance between adapting to changes and sufficient stability to be effective in the current environment.

Clients may resist attempts to have them look broadly at the ramifications of specific actions or inactions. Three tools to consider in these cases may be an understanding of motivated reasoning (Kunda, 1990), a trip up the cascade model of personality elements described above, and application of unconditional positive regard (UPR; Wilkins, 2000).

Motivated reasoning is a phenomenon in which an individual holds a specific worldview that is based upon misinformation. When the individual is confronted with facts that contradict their view, the effort may actually backfire and result in the individual becoming further entrenched in that view (Lewandowsky et al., 2012; Nyhan & Reifler, 2010). Several strategies can be used to overcome the misinformation, including an agreement with the worldview with subsequent presentation of facts (Lewandowsky et al., 2012).

Similarly, if you find the client's attitudes, values, or beliefs at odds with reality, you may need to move up to the traits and needs of the client. Explore the deeper level of the attitude, value, or belief. Can you find common ground at the deeper level, and if so, how can you connect at this deeper level? In some respects, this is tapping into in-group/out-group bias (Sherif et al., 1961; Zaki, 2014).

Finally, the practice of unconditional positive regard (UPR; Wilkins, 2000) may be the "secret sauce" for all coaching engagements, and a good reminder here. This empathy, unconditional acceptance, and congruence may promote an acceptance of the broader view and the ramifications of client actions on the pertinent systems.

What is most important is to work with the client to ensure they are considering the implications of their actions on broader and broader systems—even out to the global scale.

Call to Action

Following are six ways to put this knowledge into action.

Coach for Enhanced Adaptability It is time to move beyond coaching for sustained change and resilience. It is time to coach for adaptability, that is, adjusting to specific environmental conditions and thriving in those new conditions. But it is not enough to just adapt to the current situation, one must anticipate and be ready to adjust for possible future situations.

Do Not Let Complacency Set In Just because you do not see much change in your community or industry does not mean you are in the clear. As mentioned previously, systems frequently behave in nonlinear ways and at transition points a small change or disruption can cause a large shift. Wielkiewicz and Stelzner (2005) put it well, "However, the appearance of a stable pattern may be a signal that the organization needs to beware of environmental shifts that could make the current adaptation obsolete." (p. 336). In other words, stability is an illusion.

Move Up the Cascade of Personality If you find resistance on the part of a client, you may need to dig deeper and explore the values or beliefs behind an attitude, or perhaps ultimately back to a trait or need. Uncovering these deeper elements of personality may shift the client's paradigm from a single path going to a single destination to a multi-lane freeway with numerous exits to disparate locations.

Combine Facilitation with Coaching In a group or team setting, facilitation is often used as an adjunct modality to team coaching. Facilitation differs from coaching in that it focuses on promoting dialogue and achieving clarity on one or more issues at hand. This may be necessary at times to achieve a mutual understanding amongst the parties involved and to get a broad range of perspectives. In contrast, team coaching will go deeper into the team dynamics and the coach will partner with the team to promote positive outcomes. Combining facilitation with coaching can achieve powerful outcomes. Emery et al. (2011) illustrate how this can be done quite effectively in community settings. As they write and to the point above, coaches should "encourage a broader vision" (p. 27).

Promote Polycentric Systems Individuals and leaders can take action at multiple scales, from local to global (polycentric systems; Ostrom, 2010). While local efforts may seem to be ineffective at sustainability on a global scale, a plethora of such efforts can indeed have significant efficacy. In fact, a group of scientists with the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America feels that it "will require a whole systems approach at multiple scales in space and time" (Beddoe et al., 2009, p. 2488).

Promote a View of the Broader Context Ask your client how their new attitudes, actions, or behaviors might affect other individuals. Think in terms of larger and larger circles or spheres of influence from team to family to community to country, and ultimately to our planet. At each level of context, how is the client affecting the

system? What if there is a shift in that system? How can the client adapt to that shift? This is ultimately at the heart of coaching for sustainability.

As stated at the outset, coaching can be a potent tool in our arsenal working toward sustainability. Coaching can raise individual, team, and group awareness of the broader context of an issue. When combined with facilitation in group settings, the modality and process may be far more effective than others.

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The Coaching Relationship

Sonja M. Mannhardt and Erik de Haan

Introduction

Andrew, project manager, is recommended coaching to improve his "leadership performance" and he wonders which coach out of the suggested ones will be the best for him. Is it enough if he goes by his gut feeling and chooses someone he considers authentic, trustworthy and competent to accompany him in his request?

Francis is a management coach. She wonders why the coaching process with Andrew is going so well. Her competence, her behaviour, her methods are always the same. The HR manager wonders whether she could achieve good coaching results by working with other clients in the future.

All those involved ultimately ask themselves the same question: How does the coaching relationship succeed? What do we know about this key concept? Can something as personal and unique as a newly emerging relationship between coach and client be explained in principle and explored in general?

In any case, the subject of relationships has always been a driving force for people. From birth on, humans are related to other humans. As a "normalised premature birth", which is born much too early compared to other mammals, humans cannot help but take decisive developmental steps in the "social uterus" in order to survive (Portmann, 1969, p. 87 f.). The ability to relate in the sense of social care, the need for relationships and bonding behaviour, i.e. the active search for the closeness

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of a familiar conspecific, are part of the nature of man. According to Thomas Aquinas, man is an "animal social", a social being designed and arranged for community (cf. also Adler, 2008), which can only be understood as a human being among people with whom he maintains more or less distanced or close relationships.

This presupposition has driven research in many industries to find out how and what characterises successful relationships.

In this chapter, the coaching relationship and its concepts as well as findings from exploratory research will be presented. It also takes into account related disciplines that explore so-called helping relationships or developmental relationships (Search Institute, 2016), i.e. relationships characterised by connectedness, increasing complexity and intensity, and a balanced power relationship between partners. Suggestions for implementation are provided at the end of each chapter to facilitate the transfer of practical experience.

Coaching Relationship as a "Common Factor"

That there is a close connection between the patient–doctor relationship and the effect on health was recently shown by Kelley et al. (2014) in a meta-analysis. Sigmund Freud (1912) saw the positive relationship between therapist and patient as the basis for a positive transference (see chapter "Transference and Counter-Transference"). This alliance creates the initial security and trust the patient needs for a successful analysis. Rosenzweig conjectured there are probably still undiscovered factors present in every therapeutic situation (1936). Rogers (1951) was convinced the therapeutic relationship is the critical variable and not what the therapist says or does. That psychotherapy works in comparison to a supportive environment and a control group has already been proven in more than 500 meta-analyses (Lambert, 2011). The question of the comparative effectiveness of different therapeutic approaches and the way in which and through which psychotherapy works, on the other hand, has given rise to a real controversy, culminating in the question: "do treatments cure disorders or do relationships heal people?" (Norcross & Lambert, 2011, p. 4). Since then, researchers have divided this question into two camps: one group believes that specific techniques are decisive for good results, while the other group relies on "general factors" (see chapter "Success Factors in the Coaching Process") and thus, among other things, on the healing power of the relationship. Of all the common factors, the therapeutic relationship is the best studied.

View into "Relationship Research"

One of the first to bring relationships out of psychotherapy research was Bordin (1979). His pan-theoretic model of the working alliance, which transcends therapy schools and even subjects, assumes a large part of the quality of the relationship between therapist and client depends on the way they work together. He distinguished three partial aspects of the working alliance: (1) in the emotional bond, he examined whether the joint work is based on mutual trust, acceptance and mutual commitment. (2) The task component (task) refers to the coordination of the task, the intervention techniques used and the framework conditions of the process. (3) The goal dimension of the therapeutic relationship (goal) refers to the coordination and agreement of the goals to be striven for.

Since then, more than 30 measuring instruments have been developed (e.g. CALPAS, HAq, WAI) with a different focus (patient perspective, therapist perspective, transfer aspect) and different applications (practice or research or both) with the aim of investigating the therapeutic relationship and therapeutic alliance and predicting the success of a therapy. This does not make it easy to compare the results (Hank & Krampen, 2008). Outside of the therapeutic context, the questionnaire of Horvath and Greenberg "Working Alliance Inventory" (WAI) has gained acceptance (1989). In its 36 items, it follows the operationalisation of Bordin. The German short form (WAI-SR) was examined by Wilmers et al. (2008) and also found useful for practice.

With the help of such questionnaires, a significant connection between therapeutic relationships and therapeutic success has already been found in many cases and confirmed in meta-analyses. This applies both to the therapeutic relationship as a whole and to the therapeutic alliance between client and therapist (Flückiger et al., 2015; Norcross & Lambert, 2011) ($r = 0.27$, confidence interval $0.25 < r < 0.31$). The relationship components goal agreement ($r = 0.33$) or empathy of the therapist ($r = 0.31$) seem particularly important for achieving good results. Therapists who succeed in establishing good relationships actually seem to achieve better results, with the early working relationship appearing to be a particularly good predictor of therapeutic success (Flückiger et al., 2015, p. 4).

As insightful as the above-mentioned research is, it must nevertheless be noted there are differences between coaching and psychotherapy (Rauen, 2014), so in the following, we will look at coaching research in particular.

Coaching Relationship as a Result of Successful Cooperation

The concept of Bordin's working alliance with the subscales of commitment, task, and goal is also one of the models used in coaching when it comes to exploring the relationship between coach and client. However, coaching relationship is by no means to be used synonymously with coaching alliance, as is the case in many

studies, because the working alliance merely represents the dynamic framework on the basis of which both parties repeatedly reflect on the overall relationship (De Haan & Gannon, 2016).

One of the largest studies on the work alliance and its influence on the coaching relationship and the coaching outcome was led by De Haan. (De Haan et al., 2016; De Haan & Mannhardt, 2014). 1895 coach–client relationships could be examined retrospectively. What is special about the study is the collective reflects the entire coaching scene. Many different coaches ($n = 366$; internal/external, career, business, executive, life coaches, with different coaching methods), different clients (male $n = 875$, female $n = 918$ with different coaching occasions and goals) from many countries ($n = 22$), coaching processes with different durations and both good and failed coaching results were examined. The coaching processes were examined from three perspectives (coach, client and client) with regard to relationship strength and quality of the work alliance. A total of 1895 coach questionnaires, 1895 matching client questionnaires and 92 client questionnaires (Horvath A. O., & Greenberg, L.S. (1989)) were evaluated.

When coach and client agree the coaching process is a shared responsibility, the willingness to work together is greater. But are the bond aspects of the cooperation more decisive for good coaching results or the way in which they work together in terms of task and goal? This is what De Haan et al. (2016) wanted to find out. Regarding the coaching alliance and its influence, the following results can be summarised:

1. The strength of the coach–client relationship is very closely linked to the coaching result, both from the perspective of the coaches ($r = 0.58^{**}$: Subscales Task $r = 0.56^*$; Bond $r = 0.43^*$; Goal $r = 0.56^*$), and from the perspective of the client ($r = 0.58^{**}$: Subscales Task $r = 0.55^*$; Bond $r = 0.46$; Goal $r = 0.56^*$)

2. The WAI scores of the coaches correlate less with the final result (after the evaluation of the clients) than those of the clients. Thirty-one percent of the variance in the coaching effect can be attributed to the strength of the working alliance for clients, compared to only 4% for clients.

3. In contrast to therapeutic studies, the bonding aspect has less influence on the coaching outcome than the task and goal aspects of the work alliance ($Z = 3.57^{**}$ and $Z = 4.43^{**}$ respectively). And when coaches and clients are very empathetic, strong bonding personalities (F/F pairing), i.e. have the highest values for bonding, this led to the worst coaching results in the present study.

But why is the bonding aspect less important in coaching than in the therapeutic alliance? Since there is no coaching, but depending on the desired goal, there are already three coaching generations (Solution, Development, Sense & Values) (Stelter, 2012, 2016a, p. 267 f., 2016b) and other aspects influence coaching (see further chapters in this handbook). The question arises whether, for example, solution-focused coaching processes (skill coaching) require a less intensive coach–client relationship than second (transformational coaching) or third-generation coaching. This has already been examined in some studies on the topic

of retention and reporting (De Haan & Gannon, 2016; Bachkirova & Kauffman, 2009).

Coaching Alliance as a Result of Coach and Client Behaviour

What exactly happens between coach and client during the coaching process? Another way to investigate coaching relationships is video-assisted interaction analysis of the behaviour of the coaching partners.

Most studies deal with the behaviour of the coaches. Greif (2015) was able to show that appreciation and emotional support (2.56), promotion of self-reflection (2.23), resource activation (2.27) and goal clarification (2.20) are the most significant behaviours of the coach in terms of coaching success.

Behrendt and Greif also deal with other models of behaviour of successful coaches (see chapter "Success Factors in the Coaching Process"). Gessnitzer and Kauffeld (2015) compared 31 coaching processes by means of questionnaires and video recordings and were able to show there is no correlation between the data collected, which indicates observed behaviour is not the same as the subjectively perceived interaction events of the participants. In this study, the bonding aspect between client and coach also had no effect on the coaching outcome. Furthermore, it was shown that the client's agreement with the task and the goal must come from the client in order for coaching to be successful, whereas when the task and the goal come from the coach, the opposite is the case. This suggests a successful work alliance requires an actively involved client when it comes to clarifying the task and the coaching goal. This coincides with the findings of pedagogy, which is worth mentioning here because coaching is now understood as an adult educational teaching–learning process (Geißler, 2016, p. 60 f.). The teacher should renounce his own activities in favour of the child and instead become passive, so the child can become active, which Maria Montessori already knew (1994, p. 139 f.).

As far as the client behaviour is concerned, Gregory and Levy (2010) were able to show that giving feedback to the client has a significant influence on the perceived coaching relationship. The same was shown by the "Visible Learning" study, which compiled results from 52,600 individual studies and over 800 meta-analyses. On feedback, Hattie (2013, p. 206, free translation) says: "The mistake I made was to see feedback as something that teachers give to learners. It was only when I discovered that feedback is most effective when it is given to the teacher by the learners that I began to understand it better".

It can be seen that a successful coaching relationship (work alliance and behavioural techniques) can only develop as an effective factor in the context of co-created interaction between coach and client and not from a vacuum. For this reason, modern process-result studies now examine how general impact factors and specific techniques interact (Pfammatter et al., 2012, p. 23).

Suggestions for Practice

1. A good coaching relationship forms a general basis for achieving good results in coaching, so more attention should be paid to this aspect in practice as well as in training.
2. Since the working alliance determines to what extent relationships are good, Andrew as well as Francis should focus on the common task and coaching goal of Andrew. These aspects are more important than a close relationship as such, which suggests that coaching partners do not have to "fit together" particularly well, but should be able to work well together.
3. The better the coach succeeds in clarifying and accompanying the task and goal of the client, the better it seems to be for the relationship.
4. Coaches should be prepared to become "learners" themselves, e.g. by consistently obtaining client feedback and becoming "passive" so the client can become active in order to clearly formulate his or her concerns and goals and actively participate.

Coaching Relationship and Personality of Coach and Client

Personal Characteristics

It sounds tempting to believe that good end results can be achieved by bringing together the coach and client in the run-up to the coaching session according to their personalities. Many research efforts have been made to examine the aspects of coach attributes, client attributes and fit between the two partners. But the data situation is not yet very meaningful. Among the coach attributes examined are, for example, warmth and friendliness, the ability to build good relationships and to respond to the client. But also, self-reflection, self-knowledge and the ability to develop oneself further, as well as adherence to a coaching ethic have been investigated many times and considered important for the coaching relationship (De Haan & Gannon, 2016).

Boyce et al. (2010) identified three characteristics of coaching partners where one improved the relationship but did not produce better results: agreement in experience, behavioural preferences and reliability with regard to the client's needs. Ianiro et al. (2013) were able to show that agreement in the aspect of belonging and opposing fit in terms of the need for dominance resulted in better relationship values and degrees of goal attainment from the perspective of the client. Overall, however, the results do not yet permit any clear conclusions to be drawn.

Gender Aspects

Gender matters, says Schigl (2012). It is only recently that gender aspects have come into focus (see chapter "Gender Theoretical Impulses for Theory and Practice of Coaching"), although the coaching scene worldwide seems to be becoming more female (ICF, 2016, p. 9). The data from the De Haan study with 60% same-sex and 40% opposite-sex pairs show the following picture: (1) Many male executives choose a female coach. This pair is the second most common. (2) Gender differences were found both in the clarification of tasks (Task: $p \leq 0.01$) and in the partial aspect of the coaching goal (Goal: $p = 0.001$) and especially in the bond strength (Bond: $p \leq 0.001$). Female coaches seem to have a slight advantage when it comes to building good working relationships. (3) Female managers also seem to be more satisfied with the outcome of their coaching processes. However, De Haan et al. (2016) are convinced good industrial relations can compensate for any gender differences that may exist (Mannhardt et al., 2016; more on this topic, see chapter "Gender Theoretical Impulses").

General Expectation of Self-Efficacy

Another key concept in coaching is self-efficacy expectation (SEE) or perceived self-efficacy by Bandura (see chapter "Motivation, Will and Implementation in Coaching"). De Haan et al. (2016) were able to show the following for 1895 coaching processes using the general self-efficacy scale (GSE) questionnaire (Schwarzer & Jerusalem, 1995): (1) The SEE of the client correlates significantly with the coaching outcome and the working alliance, both from the perspective of the client and the coach. (2) A good work alliance, especially in the goal and task aspect, is obviously able to compensate for a low SEE of the client and still achieve good results (Baron & Morin, 2009, 2012).

Suggestions for Practice

1. HR managers should not trust that apparently suitable pairs work well together.

2. Those who value trusting relationships and a good working alliance create a basis for better results, regardless of personality or gender.

3. And yet: we cannot be "neutral". Gender matters and should lead to greater gender sensitivity in practice. For example, every client could be offered a choice of both same-sex and opposite-sex coaches and every coach should at least be aware of his or her impact as a male or female coaching partner.

4. Every coach can ensure even clients with low self-efficacy expectations can be successfully coached by means of a good working alliance (orientation towards the client's mission and goal) and with general characteristics such as trust, friendliness, appreciation, resource orientation and the principle of encouragement.

Coaching Relationship as a Co-created Process of a Developing Relationship

At this point, a few aspects will be briefly outlined which have not been discussed so far, but which can be regarded as important conditional factors of the coaching relationship (framework, principles, attitudes), partly researched (described in detail in De Haan et al., 2016), partly still unnoticed.

Framework Conditions Voluntariness and Confidentiality

We know many coaching processes are "suggested" and are not always self-determined and voluntary. It is obvious this can have consequences on the self-efficacy of the client. As a side effect of the De Haan study, it could be shown the quality of the relationship suffers if it is not based on voluntariness. Significantly, the results of a coach who works exclusively in arranged coaching sessions were more than 30% below the average of the total collective of 366 coaches. Those who would like to take a closer look at the topic of voluntariness can read Böhle et al. (2012), Pätzold and Ulm (2015).

In order to maintain an open coaching relationship based on empathy and to trust each other, confidentiality is indispensable. But how can a person feel secure if the basic principle of confidentiality is not taken into account? It is not for nothing that medical confidentiality is seen as a duty to protect the patient and as the basis for a good doctor-patient relationship (Maio, 2012, p. 179 ff.). Confidentiality is also considered important in the coaching process and the duty of confidentiality towards third parties is fully recognised among coaches (Middenhoff, 2014). Not researched, however, is the aspect "place and space" in which coaching takes place, which certainly has a considerable influence on confidentiality and trust, and thus on the overall relationship.

Coaching Relationship and Temporality

Coaching is a temporary relationship, which on average spans 4–6 sessions and 4–6 months (De Haan & Mannhardt, 2014). How this temporality affects the relationship and the result is hardly researched. Baron and Morin (2009, p. 98) could only show the coaching duration seems to influence both the relationship and the effect of coaching.

The coaching relationship is dynamic and in the first coaching session is still characterised by uncertainty, doubts, scepticism and also fears. Recent studies (interaction analyses) show impressively how the coaching behaviour at the beginning in terms of confidentiality, reliability, authenticity, responsiveness to the client's strengths and wishes correlates positively with final results. However, planning, discussing, celebrating the end of a coaching process also seems to be extremely important, as coaching relationships that end too superficially or too abruptly miss the chance to achieve and integrate changes completely (De Haan & Gannon, 2016).

Principle of Trust and Transparency

Trust as the cornerstone of the coaching relationship goes back to Rogers (1951) but is today also regarded as a basic principle of leadership (Malik, 2006, p. 140 f.). The study situation on trust is rather poor, both in psychotherapy and in coaching (De Haan & Gannon, 2016), which can be explained by the use of inconsistent terminology and different explanations of this psychological construct. According to Krampen and Hank (2004) and Hewig (2008), three dimensions of trust can be distinguished: trust in oneself (self-confidence), trust in others (social trust) and trust in the future. Many studies have been able to empirically prove a connection between trust in the therapist and the therapeutic alliance, as well as the importance of interpersonal trust for the therapeutic process and the therapeutic outcome (Hewig, 2008, p. 56).

Coach transparency was considered phenomenologically by Gyllensten and Palmer (2007). They found trust is the basic prerequisite for a successful coaching relationship and transparency improves it, especially in cases of uncertainty and resistance. Further findings on partial aspects of the coaching relationship, e.g. on commitment and reporting, can be found in De Haan and Gannon (2016).

Suggestions for Practice

1. As in our introductory example, each client should be allowed to choose his or her own coach in order to create the best possible conditions for a successful coaching relationship.

2. More attention could be paid to relationship-enhancing framework conditions such as a "neutral place" and "confidential space", a time frame that allows relationship development, and a confidentiality agreement with third parties.

3. The basic coaching attitude "I trust me, I trust you, we trust each other; we engage with each other authentically and openly" can be an important counterbalance, especially in a business world in which mistrust and control are becoming increasingly widespread (Malik, 2006).

Coaching Relationship as Encounter

Helting (1999, p. 177 f.) sees the beneficial aspect of the therapeutic conversation in "being allowed to speak out", because the client can express his very own understanding of himself and the world and let it unfold. That which concerns and appeals to him personally is heard, is understood and he is thus seen for who he is. Understanding is therefore more than decoding words or "active listening"; it is a holistic understanding to be understood by a counterpart. For this to happen, both partners are related to each other, in a common "world" in being with the other (Heidegger, 1993, p. 118). This being together requires humility, the courage to serve the other, allows other perspectives and has the feeling from the outset that something can be learned from the other (Dürr, 2012, p. 96). This form of dialogue only works if both commit to each other quite spontaneously and at the same time are completely attentive to each other. A throwing and catching of what is said, a tuning in to each other (Dürr, 2012, p. 94), a changing each other. He, therefore, calls a successful dialogue a lively exchange in the sense of a communion, a transformation (Dürr, 2012, p. 48 and 88).

Summary

It is not surprising that especially today, when there is hardly any room for stable, personal relationships in the business world, when the rapid changes in the world lead to uncertainty, coaching as a special form of human relationship is gaining in importance. As we note, many factors influence the connection between coach and client.

If we consider a coaching relationship, not only scientifically, but also as a spontaneous "getting involved in the other person's world", as a relationship in

being with others (Heidegger, 1993), as being with each other in which language as a dialogical principle is even capable of transforming both partners (Dürr, 2012), it goes without saying the successful relationship work only occurs when we forget the relationship as a general construct and our actions during the process and instead turn fully to our counterpart. Or, to quote M. Scheler (1913), the human being is more in others than in himself.

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Coaching Supervision

Silja Kotte and Jannik Zimmermann

Case

In her Balint group, Charlotte, a coach, shares a current coaching case: she just started a new coaching engagement and felt very annoyed with the client right from the beginning. In order to understand the dynamics and to design the further process in a helpful and goal-oriented way, she feels the need to discuss the case in her Balint group before engaging again with her client in the next coaching session. The client is a male manager of about 40 years who is responsible for the technical management of a large craft business with 50 employees. He turned to coaching, recommended by his supervisor, the general manager, because of his difficulties to openly address and resolve conflicts associated with his leadership role. He had particular difficulties with his new management colleague, who was hired as commercial manager a few weeks ago. Charlotte describes that the client already showed up at her office for the first session half an hour before the agreed-upon time. When Charlotte arrived a quarter of an hour before the start to prepare everything in peace and quiet, the client had already "spread out" and made himself comfortable in the waiting and kitchen area and even organized himself a coffee. She felt surprised and annoyed that he had "invaded" her space in this way. However, she then simply asked him to come to the coaching room at the actually agreed-upon time and conducted the first session with him as she usually did to find out why he sought coaching and what he aimed to achieve with it. Nevertheless, she is still annoyed about his "entry."

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Introduction

As coaching establishes itself as a consulting format for professionals and managers and as a common human resource development intervention by organizations, professionalization and quality assurance become increasingly important (Hawkins & Smith, 2013). *One* approach that can help to meet this demand is coaching supervision (CS). Supervision can be defined in the broadest sense as the reflection of one's own professional practice in an interpersonal setting. It has long been established in the medical, social, educational, and therapeutic fields, especially among psychotherapists, social workers, and medical professionals (Carroll, 2006; Grant, 2012). Supervision is seen by these professionals, as a central "ingredient," both during training and during later professional practice, to ensure that professional standards are maintained, quality is assured and practice is improved (Koortzen & Odendaal, 2016).

In coaching, the more widespread use of supervision is a relatively new phenomenon; the earliest thematic publications on CS date back to the early 2000s (e.g., Hawkins & Schwenk, 2006; Hawkins & Smith, 2006), CS has become increasingly part of accreditation requirements for coaches, and coaching associations promote the use of CS as good practice (Passmore & McGoldrick, 2009; Koortzen & Odendaal, 2016). In sum, the popularity of CS has risen substantially in recent years (Bachkirova et al., 2020; Carroll, 2019). However, the picture is still very mixed as to how relevant coaches consider supervision and to what extent they make use of it—especially when compared internationally (Bachkirova et al., 2011; Hawkins & Turner, 2017; McAnally et al., 2020).

Origin and Definition of Coaching Supervision

Supervision can be derived etymologically from the Latin word "over-view." The first attempts at supervision were already made in the US at the end of the nineteenth century (Belardi, 1994). Volunteers from charitable organizations were advised and accompanied but also monitored in their work with people in need. In the 1920s, control analysis (or control supervision) was introduced in the US and in German-speaking countries. In control analysis, experienced psychoanalysts introduce young colleagues to their future practice as psychoanalysts, a form of training supervision that continues to this day. In the 1940s, Michael Balint developed an additional approach in seminars for general practitioners which has shaped present-day supervision. His aim was to develop a holistic approach to medicine in the sense that physicians too should have basic knowledge of psychotherapy. He taught them how to use themselves and their feelings as an instrument for patient treatment. While supervision was initially limited to the dyadic setting, Balint developed the first form of group supervision and thereby the possibility of using the group as a tool for "relationship diagnostics". After the Second World War, supervision developed into

a work-related counseling format of its own, especially in the German-speaking world, characterized by incorporating the perspectives of the individual, team, and organizational context and aimed at enabling individuals, groups, and teams in organizations to (self-)reflect and improve the effectiveness of their professional practice (Rappe-Giesecke, 2003).

Today, the term supervision is used and understood differently depending on the respective context and country. In German, supervision and coaching are often used synonymously for the individual setting. The English "CS" therefore denotes special sub-forms of the broader German term of supervision, namely supervision during training ("Ausbildungssupervision" or "Lehrsupervision") or supervision of later professional practice as a coach ("Kontrollsupervision").

In the English-speaking context, supervision as an approach to reflecting on one's professional practice must be distinguished from *supervision* in the sense of a management function: in the latter, the term *supervisor* refers to the line manager who has managerial authority over their employees. The notion that supervision is also a format for reflecting on one's professional practice is found almost exclusively in the helping professions, often specified as "clinical supervision" (Moyes, 2009; Koortzen & Odendaal, 2016)—and in the transfer to coaching, namely *CS*.

When coaches are asked what they mean by supervision of their coaching practice, they express very different opinions (Lawrence & Whyte, 2014). Some coaches understand supervision as the informal exchange with fellow coaches regarding their coaching cases. Other coaches explicitly distance themselves from such a broad use of the term and emphasize that for them supervision refers exclusively to a clearly contracted support format in which they discuss and reflect upon their own coaching cases with the help of a supervisor, usually an experienced coach, with whom they engage in a paid contract in an individual or a group setting (Lawrence & Whyte, 2014).

In the (scientific) literature on CS, the definition of supervision varies greatly as well (Tkach & DiGirolamo, 2017). The narrowest definitions describe supervision as a process of reflection in a dyadic setting between coach and supervisor:

> Supervision sessions are a place for the coach to reflect on the work they are undertaking, with another more experienced coach. It has the dual purpose of supporting the continued learning and development of the coach, as well as giving a degree of protection to the person being coached. (Bluckert, 2005, cit. after Passmore & McGoldrick, 2009, p. 144)

Slightly broader definitions include not only the dyadic setting but also the group setting, insofar as it is led by a supervisor:

> Supervision in coaching can be broadly understood as being a structured process for coaches designed to help coaches attend to improving the quality of the coaching, to grow their coaching capabilities and support themselves and their practice with the help of a coaching supervisor. (Grant, 2012, p. 17)

The broadest definitions include, in addition to individual and group settings, forms of peer advice and support without a formal supervisor:

> Coaching supervision is a formal process of professional support, which ensures continuing development of the coach and effectiveness of their coaching practice through interactive

reflection, interpretative evaluation, and the sharing of expertise. (Bachkirova, 2008, pp. 16, 17)

In this chapter, CS is defined broadly in line with the latter definition in order to do justice to the variety of different settings that coaches use to reflect on their coaching practice. However, purely informal exchanges are excluded: CS is therefore understood here as the reflection of one's own coaching practice in a clearly contracted individual or multi-person setting.

However, this definition also clarifies, what distinguishes supervision from other forms of *continuous professional development* (*CPD;* see Passmore & McGoldrick, 2009) that are also relevant in coaching, including individual forms of reflection (e.g., writing protocols, or a reflective journal/logbook), continuing education programs focused on the acquisition of knowledge and skills, or merely informal exchange among coaching colleagues.

Types of Coaching Supervision

Regarding the setting, CS can be divided into individual and multi-person settings. Moreover, it can be used regularly or on an ad hoc basis. The contract can be more or less formally concluded, including whether or not CS is paid for (Lawrence & Whyte, 2014; Passmore & McGoldrick, 2009). A distinction can also be made between CS as part of the initial coach training and supervision of coaches' ongoing practice.

The various settings for CS are discussed here in more detail. In *individual CS,* a coach seeks out a supervisor, usually a more experienced coach who might also have undergone additional training in supervision (Koortzen & Odendaal, 2016). In this dyadic setting, coaches discuss their coaching processes on a regular basis or address particular "difficult cases," for example when they have the impression that they are not getting anywhere or feel burdened, as in the example of Charlotte who was annoyed with her client's "entry." In *group supervision*, a group of coaches meets at regular intervals under the direction of an external supervisor to review their coaching practice. Group supervision, in contrast to team supervision, is defined by the fact that the coaches have no professional relationship with each other and come together voluntarily. In the context of coaching, these supervision groups can be homogeneous, i.e., they can be made up exclusively of coaches, or heterogeneous, for example by bringing together coaches and human resource professionals. A prototype of group supervision with a special focus on the professionals' clients is the Balint group, the type of group supervision chosen by the coach in our example, Charlotte. Balint groups are particularly designed for helping participants reflect upon the relationship to their clients and to the client system in order to develop their professional identity and to ensure the quality of their work (Freitag-Becker et al., 2017). When coaches meet without an external supervisor, one speaks of *peer supervision* or, more clearly, of *intervision*. In this setting, coaches present their

cases and questions to each other and collaboratively search for new understanding and for solutions to concrete challenges. Intervision differs from a mere informal collegial exchange by the contract to engage in a binding collegial support relationship over a certain period of time.

Functions of Coaching Supervision: And Its Effect?

The literature on CS often describes three main functions: *a developmental*, *a supportive,* and a *quality assurance* function. These superordinate functions can be traced back to considerations by Hawkins and Smith (*developmental, resourcing, qualitative;* Hawkins & Smith, 2006), who in turn drew on similar functions from the field of social work (*educational*, *supportive*, *managerial*; Kadushin, 1976) and counseling (*formative*, *restorative*, *normative*; Proctor, 1987). The *developmental* function (Hawkins & Smith, 2006, pp. 151, 152) implies that supervision is an opportunity for coaches to develop their expert, process, and field competence. In a study by Passmore and McGoldrick (2009), for example, the coaches who were interviewed stated that supervision offers them the opportunity to regularly reflect on their practice, open up alternative perspectives, and learn through feedback. The *supportive* or *resourcing* function (Hawkins & Smith, 2006, p. 152) of supervision implies that it contributes to the relief from strain, to mental hygiene, and to (re)-invigoration by supporting the coach in building up or regaining the psychological resources they need to fulfill their role as coach. Coaches reported, for example, that the support and challenge provided by the supervisor helped them to address difficult issues, like negative feelings toward the client as was the case for Charlotte. Coaches also felt strengthened, especially in group settings, by the feeling of being part of a larger coaching community (Passmore & McGoldrick, 2009). The *quality assurance* or *control function* (Hawkins & Smith, 2006, p. 152) consists of examining the quality of different aspects of the coaching practice and of reflecting on professional and ethical standards. Coaches reported that they were better able to deal with ethical dilemmas. Moreover, even in more difficult dynamics, they had a stronger desire to deliver high-quality coaching and to address rather than avoid sensitive issues in the coaching process (Passmore & McGoldrick, 2009).

While coaches seem to be generally convinced of the benefits of CS and coaching associations advocate CS as good practice, the actual positive effects of CS still need to be empirically confirmed through studies with high-quality research designs. A first step in this direction can already be seen: as Bachkirova et al. (2020) show in their recent review on CS, first empirical studies exist, which point to the value of CS. Müller et al. (2020), for example, found initial indications in their study that CS can reduce the mental stress of coaches. Graßman and Schermuly (2018) found that CS can positively impact upon negative side effects of coaching. However, Bachkirova et al. (2020) emphasize that given the current state of the empirical literature, it is not yet possible to speak of CS effectiveness. Rather, they speak of the value of CS because the available evidence on the effects of CS is limited (13 papers)

and primarily based on subjective assessments of the benefit of CS. Moreover, the conceptualization and operationalization of the effectiveness of CS are still in progress and, with the exception of Graßman and Schermuly (2018), experimental designs are still lacking to date. In contrast, research on psychotherapeutic or clinical supervision is much further advanced (e.g., Auckenthaler, 1999; Möller et al., 2017; Strauß et al., 2010; Wheeler & Richards, 2007). For example, the extant empirical studies relate psychotherapeutic supervision to its effects on therapists and patients, including specific effects of concrete characteristics of supervision such as its duration, frequency, or theoretical focus.

Models of Coaching Supervision: The "Seven-Eyed" Model

A variety of different models of CS have been developed to date (see Bachkirova et al., 2011; Freitag-Becker et al., 2017; Koortzen & Odendaal, 2016; Passmore, 2011), often with elements borrowed from social work and clinical supervision (Gray & Jackson, 2011; Koortzen & Odendaal, 2016). In addition, different theoretical approaches can be used in CS (as is the case for coaching). For example, CS can be approached from a psychodynamic, Gestalt-oriented, person-centered, or systemic supervision background (see Bachkirova et al., 2011; Freitag-Becker et al., 2017; Passmore, 2011).

In the following, the *seven-eyed process model of coaching supervision* (Hawkins & Shohet, 1989; Hawkins & Smith, 2013) is described to illustrate what can become the subject of supervision sessions. The model is based on a systemic approach to the supervision process. It focuses on the interaction between the supervision system (supervisor–coach) and the coaching system (coach–client). This results in seven "*spaces*" (Hawkins, 2010) within this model (see Fig. 1): (1) the client, (2) the coach's interventions, (3) the relationship between coach and client, (4) the coach, (5) parallel processes, (6) self-reflection of the supervisor, and (7) the larger systemic (organizational, industry-level, societal) context.

The *focus on the client (1)* implies a closer look at the person of the client and their role and about reflecting on the issues and associated feelings, thoughts, and behaviors with which they come to the coaching engagement. In addition to the *what*, it is also discussed *how* the client has addressed their issues and how they enter into contact with the coach, in order to identify possibly unconscious topics that can be further explored in the supervision session (Hawkins & Smith, 2013). In Charlotte's case, for example, the Balint group would explore what it could mean for the client to take so much space right at the beginning of the coaching engagement.

Regarding the *interventions of the coach (2),* the different hypotheses, reactions, and interventions of the coach during the coaching session are reflected upon. Together, coach and supervisor explore possible alternative interventions and their respective effects. Frequently, the interventions that are addressed are those about which a coach is particularly unsure, or when coaches feel "stuck" within the coaching process (Hawkins, 2010). In the case of Charlotte, this could imply
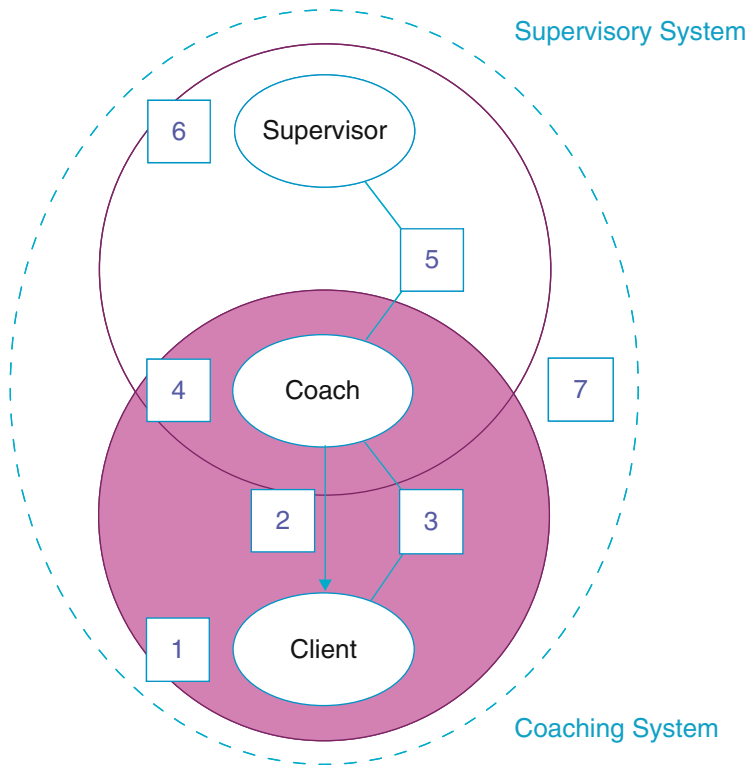
Fig. 1 The "seven-eyed" process model of coaching supervision (adapted from Hawkins, 2010, p. 223)

considering how she could address this type of entry in a conducive way with the client instead of adopting a business-as-usual approach to the first coaching session.

Reflecting on the *relationship (dynamics) between coach and client (3)* is in line with the substantial empirical evidence on the importance of a sound working alliance for the success of coaching (see Graßmann et al., 2020; see also the section on "Coaching Relationship" in this handbook). Supervision supports the coach in looking at the coach–client relationship from the outside and in exploring its conscious and unconscious dimensions (Crowe, 2016). One hypothesis that was developed in Charlotte's Balint group, for example, was that Charlotte's experience of her client could be an indication of how much the client felt cornered and overwhelmed by his new management colleague, the commercial manager. However, the client might not have been able to express this verbally at such an early stage of the coaching process and therefore enacted it in the coach–client relationship.

The coach's reflection on themselves (4) is also part of supervision. According to Hawkins and Smith (2013), coaches should, with the help of their supervisor, reflect

upon the feelings and impulses the client's behavior and topics trigger in them and how they can use themselves as an "instrument" to gain access to underlying or hidden topics that the client cannot verbalize. In addition, the coach's own issues and possible blind spots that may hinder the coaching process are also explored. In our case, Charlotte was herself surprised at the intensity and persistence of her anger and used the Balint group to differentiate between her own shares and possible messages from the client.

Parallel processes (5) are also explored in supervision. The concept of parallel processes is based on the assumption that certain dynamics from the client system or in the coach–client relationship can be reflected or "mirrored" in supervision, for example by the coach behaving toward the supervisor in a similar way as their client behaves toward them in coaching, oftentimes without noticing it (cf. also Passmore & McGoldrick, 2009). This means that the supervisor keeps a close eye on the "here and now" of the supervision session and provides the coach with their observations and hypotheses in order to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the client and their organizational environment. In the setting of group supervision, team dynamics from the client system can also be restaged in the supervision group and contribute to the understanding of the coaching case. This could be the case, for example, if Charlotte herself was to be conspicuously vehement in demanding that she would have to get her turn to present her case in the current Balint group session, so that the theme of "taking space" would also be staged in the supervision group.

The *self-reflection of the supervisor (6)* involves the supervisor being attentive to their own impulses, feelings, thoughts, and fantasies in the here-and-now of the supervision session, beyond the material described by the coach, and bringing them into the supervision. The aim is to better understand the client and/or the coach–client relationship.

Focusing on the *larger context (7)* implies exploring the organizational, societal, and cultural context within which the coaching process takes place. It also implies looking at how and with whom the coaching contract was agreed upon. The different stakeholders and (sub)systems that impact the coaching process are considered, in particular the organization of the client (the client system). The supervisor and the coach jointly explore the extent to which the structure, culture, and other dynamics of the organization influence the client, the coach, and the coaching process. In the case that Charlotte presented in her Balint group, the client had been recommended to seek coaching by his supervisor, the managing director, who had also hired the commercial manager. For the client, this created additional tensions between the friendly relationship he had with the managing director and his struggle with the commercial manager.

Even if the organizational context only appears as one of seven focuses in the seven-eyed model of CS, many authors (e.g., Passmore & McGoldrick, 2009; Koortzen & Odendaal, 2016), including Hawkins and Smith themselves, emphasize that the systemic view and reflection of the organizational context is the core task of CS. Only such a systemic view can prevent issues and challenges from being inadequately "individualized."

"Popularity" and Dissemination of Coaching Supervision

The number of publications on CS has increased significantly in recent years. On the one hand, a number of conceptually oriented books have been published (including Bachkirova et al., 2011; Birch & Welch, 2019; De Haan, 2012; De Haan & Regouin, 2016; Freitag-Becker et al., 2017; Hawkins & Smith, 2013; Passmore, 2011). On the other hand, the number of empirical articles in peer-reviewed journals is increasing. To date, four reviews on CS have been published that summarize the state of the literature (Bachkirova et al., 2020; Joseph, 2016; Moyes, 2009; Tkach & DiGirolamo, 2017). Even the most recent reviews conclude, however, that there is still a lack of high-quality empirical studies.

Despite this shortcoming, many coaching associations on a national and international level advocate regular supervision of coaches and have developed corresponding guidelines; in addition, commissioning organizations, especially large corporations, increasingly demand CS as one of the requirements for the inclusion of coaches in coach pools (Koortzen & Odendaal, 2016).

To what extent do coaches actually make use of supervision? Initial data on a range of different countries are already available, including the UK (Hawkins & Schwenk, 2006), Australia (Grant, 2012), France (Professional Supervisors Federation, 2014), Europe (Passmore et al., 2017), and the global landscape (Hawkins & Turner, 2017; McAnally et al., 2020). The data suggest an increasing popularity of CS: in the UK, Hawkins and Turner (2017) found a significant increase from 2006 to 2014 in the number of coaches who said they use CS (44% vs. 92% of surveyed coaches). Questions about prior experience with CS often yield very high percentages of coaches answering yes: according to Hawkins and Turner (2017), the percentage of coaches using CS globally in 2014 was 83%. McAnally et al. (2020) similarly found a global average in 2018 of 88% of coaches who had experience with CS in an individual setting and 65% who had experience with CS in a group setting. However, coaches seem to use CS as a regular, routine tool much less frequently than the high share of coaches who indicate experience with CS suggests. Taken together, the above-mentioned studies show that the frequency of use, the type of CS used and the reason for use vary greatly—both between coaches and across the regions under consideration. For example, while CS appears to be widespread in the UK and Europe in particular, it is much less established in North America (Hawkins & Turner, 2017; McAnally et al., 2020). Here, other forms of continuous professional development for coaches, such as continuing education and training, individual reflective practices (e.g., reflection logbooks), or informal forms of exchange and support seem to be more common (Passmore & McGoldrick, 2009). A problem with studies on the use of CS is that the underlying samples are not representative and that they tend to overestimate the popularity of CS due to multiple selection biases (e.g., distribution of calls for study participation through coaching associations, self-selection of coaches with a particular interest in CS). In summary, research on both the effectiveness and use of CS lags far behind its rising popularity and the value that is attributed to CS on the basis of coaching practitioners' experience.

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Communication as a Method and as a Topic in Coaching

Wolfgang Scholl, Karin Lackner, and Kathleen Grieger

Case Study

A newly appointed project manager, Jaz, from the product marketing department, was shocked by the aggressive tone used by his colleagues from R&D, Sales, and Controlling. In his coaching, he reported that he usually behaved defensively in such situations, but also became here and then aggressive toward the others when they got lost in tiny details. A following reflection about the involved specialists revealed that stereotypes and prejudices were frequently used in organizational communication: Sales people were "perfunctory", not having sufficient technical understanding. Developers were engineers who were "overly fond of detail" and had "no sense for customer needs." The financial people were "penny-pinchers." Across the company, there seemed to be a lack of perspective-taking and empathy. These practices led to misunderstandings and more arguments than Jaz had seen before in his previous company. Equipped with a clearer understanding of the situation through the coaching, Jaz succeeded to apply newly acquired facilitation techniques for a reflection about the troubling stereotyping climate. Step by step, they together learned to accept and respect different specialist perspectives and came to estimate an open and cooperative discussion that fosters understanding and insight.

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Communication: Basics

Communication is the attempt to understand each other and to seek agreement (chapter "Understanding in Coaching: An Intersubjective Process"). In general, communication and interaction are hard to separate, but communication is mainly thought of as an exchange of symbols, while interaction is primarily mentioned as an exchange of actions (chapter "Interaction as a Basic Theme in Coaching"). Communication comprises verbal and non-verbal forms of expression (chapter "Means of Verbal and Nonverbal Communication in Coaching"). Non-verbal expression developed earlier in evolution and is partly biologically determined, whereas verbal communication seems to occur exclusively in humans. The famous statement *"You cannot not communicate"* (Watzlawick et al., 1967) is based on the constant presence of non-verbal communication, which only requires some kind of encounter. The importance of non-verbal communication via facial expressions, eye contact, gestures, voice, posture, etc. is increasingly being considered in research on embodiment, i.e., on physical sensations and experiences (Semin & Smith, 2008; Maiese, 2011; chapter "Embodiment and Its Importance for Coaching"), because non-verbal expression is always connected with the own physical (proprioceptive) sensations, such as breathing, blushing, being tense, etc. The non-verbal expression associated with bodily movements and the emotional meaning of the words used (chapter "Language and Meaning as Basic Topics in Coaching") signal either the feelings toward each other or the meaning of the respective topic; they create a common space of understanding, experience, and collaborative membership. "Communication is the single most important factor influencing a person's health and their relationships with others" (Satir, 1983).

The feelings and their non-verbal and verbal expressions unfold in the dimensions of (1) valence (positive versus negative) respectively communion (friendly versus hostile), (2) of power (strong, superior versus weak, inferior), and (3) of activation (active, excited versus passive, calm) (Fontaine et al., 2007; Mehrabian, 1972; Osgood et al., 1975; Scholl, 2013). All words used within a culture have a socially shared emotional meaning, located within this three-dimensional emotional space (Osgood et al., 1975; see Fig. 1). Research on Affect Control Theory has shown (Heise, 2007; MacKinnon, 1994; chapter "Language and Meaning as Basic Themes in Coaching"), that any combination of words in utterances and sentences produces special feelings in speakers and listeners within this three-dimensional space which may feel clear or strange, depending on their *emotional* consistency. The meaning of a sentence may be consistent with the resulting meaning of the words, e.g., "the superior gives advice to the subordinate." Yet, a word combination can also produce an inconsistency (called deflection), e.g., "the subordinate gives advice to the superior" (?). In this example, the felt inconsistency lies primarily in the emotional power dimension because "giving advice" is a somewhat powerful act, which is expected from a more powerful actor toward a less powerful actor, but not the other way round. Such an inconsistency demands either an explanatory amendment, i.e., a change of the words, e.g., "a *specialized* subordinate (who now is felt as more
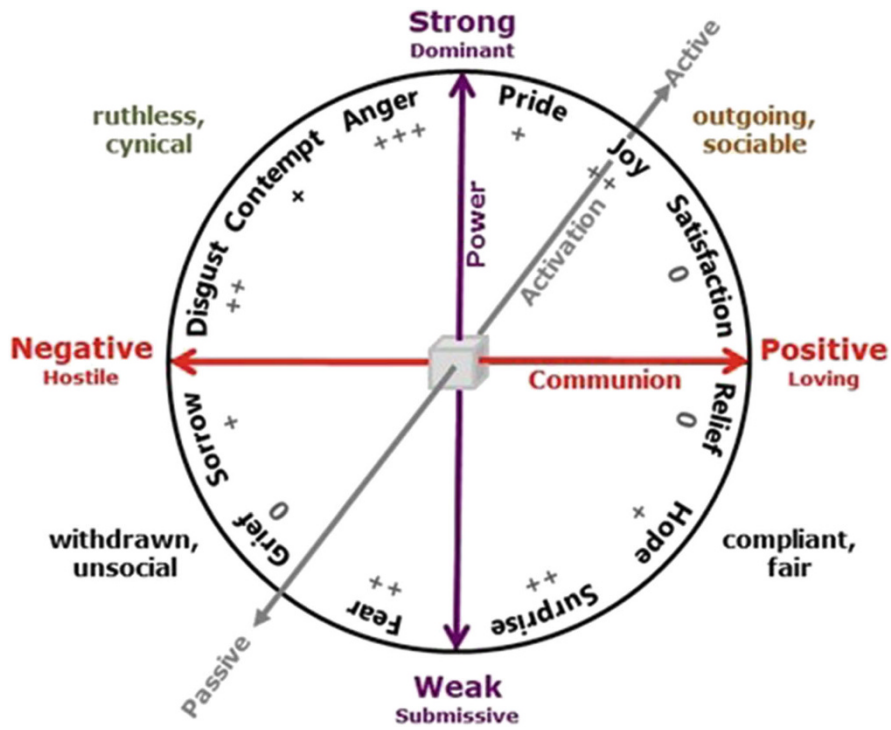
Fig. 1 Behavior, personality, and feelings (Fontaine et al., 2007; Jacobs & Scholl, 2005)

powerful with this attribute) gives advice to the *new* superior (who now is felt as somewhat less powerful with this attribute)." Or the observed reality was incompletely reported, e.g., "the superior asks the subordinate to explain the technical system" which then is followed by "the subordinate gives advice to the superior." In order to understand each other, people always try to be culturally consistent in their utterances and thus reinforce the cultural emotional meaning of the word usage. Indeed, not only (non)verbal communication is shaped by these three emotional dimensions and structures, but also the entire behavior and personality perception (Scholl, 2013). This is confirmed for the agency (power) and communion dimensions by a huge body of research (e.g., Abele & Wojciszke, 2013). The corresponding circular arrangement together with the emotions and the third, activation dimension is shown graphically in Fig. 1.

Another important property of communication is the usual emotional underscoring of verbal expressions with non-verbal means or the fine-grained non-verbal modulation of the special meaning of a verbal utterance. It is needed for a better mutual understanding of the interlocutors and, on the other hand, for checking the credibility of verbal statements whether there is nonagreement with the non-verbal expression, because the latter is less consciously controllable (Jacob et al., 2013). However, a disagreement can also be deliberately used for irony,

sarcasm, or witty remarks. More than in many other professions, it is important for coaches to grasp the resonant feelings and thus the meaning in the client's statements and non-verbal expressions (chapter "Means of Verbal and Non-verbal Communication in Coaching"), i.e., to be able to take the client's perspective and to be able to sense and express empathy. The *what* of communication receives its exact meaning through *how* it is expressed.

Communication Models

The emotional significance of non-verbal and verbal communication is reflected in several communication models. According to Watzlawick et al. (1967), every communication has a content aspect and an emotional relationship aspect. The relational aspect was detailed in the four-sides model of communication by Schulz von Thun (1981), which distinguishes not only *content* and *relationship* aspects, but also *expression* of own stance and *appeal* to the other.

A scientifically more detailed examination of these four sides and their anchoring in society results from the basic assumptions of symbolic interactionism (McCall & Simmons, 1978; MacKinnon, 1994): For successful communication, people must identify the most important elements of a situation and this includes above all themselves, their partners, and their roles, which are predetermined through the expectations of society or organization: "Who am I in this situation and who is my counterpart?" "Do the mutual expectations fit together?" "Do we find a sufficient consensus on our role identities?" In psychology and linguistics, this is often called *grounding* (Clark, 1996). Usually, this happens automatically and is clear in familiar situations. Each (role) identity has a conventional part, i.e., the socially expected role aspects such as task orientations, interests, skills, knowledge, and attitudes. And it has a personal part, which reflects the habitualized role behavior shaped through specific individual experiences, inclinations, and wishes. In psychology, researchers usually speak of self-facets or of the situational *working self* instead of role identities (Schütz & Sellin, 2003) that omits the social embedding and actualization. In Symbolic Interactionism, the relationship aspect is termed "definition of the situation" that results from the alignment of the role identities of the participants. It is best understood as an adaptive process in which they express their understanding of the relationship through the representation of a certain identity (expression) and expect a confirming counter-role identity (appeal), a kind of self-verification (Swann & Bosson, 2008). For easy alignment, the confirmation wishes of the other are to be taken into account by *taking the role of the other*. Socially incompetent people do not master this very well and those with more power often ignore it. The alignment process is usually fast and unconscious. If it is more deliberate and targeted, one speaks of *Impression Management* on the expression side, i.e., one wants to control the impression made on others (Mummendey, 1995). On the appeal side, it is called *altercasting*, i.e., one wants to put the other person in a role that confirms one's own identity, e.g., by searching for suitable topics and reporting certain episodes

(Weinstein & Deutschberger, 1963). *Fishing for compliments*, for example, or to ask *"How did I do?"* after a performance; this puts others in a consenting role if politeness is expected. For the career in organizations, skillful appearances and speeches are important with which a positive impression is created in important others (Goffman, 1959); if necessary, third persons are additionally involved in one's presentation by *altercasting*.

> Here are some common occurrences in the modern workplace: Negotiated role identities can become questionable at any time in the course of communication—someone *gets out of line*: An employee may *not* appear to be *committed enough* (because of private sorrows). Another is overly *assiduous* (in order to compensate a former failure). The newcomer in the team *loses ground* through sappy quips (which was a funny game in his former team). Someone *assails* a group member because the competence seems questioned by other's argument. A *rash statement* reduces sympathy, *criteria* are *interpreted differently* depending on sympathy, and different points of view may lead to bitter opposition after a few *wrong words*.

In such cases, a role identity gets more negative attributes and may interfere with smooth processing. Counterreactions in attributes and behavior may result and unexpected dynamics develop. It is often underestimated but all communication and interactive behavior is infused with the perceived identities of the actors (Heise, 2007; Schröder & Scholl, 2009). Systemic questions in coaching often serve to raise the client's awareness of how he is seen by others or what identity is attributed to him in a certain role context.

The communication model in Fig. 2 picks these concepts up, following Brauner (1994, p. 76) and MacKinnon and Heise (2010, p. 7). It is primarily influenced by symbolic-interactionist research which already in its name emphasizes the use of symbols in interaction. Communication is a *co-creation*, a process of mutual influence through non-verbal and verbal expressions (talking) on the one hand and selective attention and unconscious reactions (noticing) on the other. The upper frame bar shows the dependence on society, which is on the one hand given by *institutions, e.g.,* the distribution of certain rights, the channeling of possible role identities into educational courses and professions, the available technologies, etc. On the other hand, the spoken language of everyday words and disciplinary terms create a specific *world view around the issues at hand* that must be used in a cognitive and emotional consistent way in order to remain understandable, even in the case of diverging views (Heise et al., 2015; MacKinnon, 1994). Both influence the social dynamics between the individuals in conversation, which is reflected in suitable role identities, expected behaviors, and in the type and content of the communication process about the specific topic, depicted in the middle bar of Fig. 2.

In the lower frame, the evolutionary basis of human action is outlined, which unfolds through social perception and communication within the three biologically
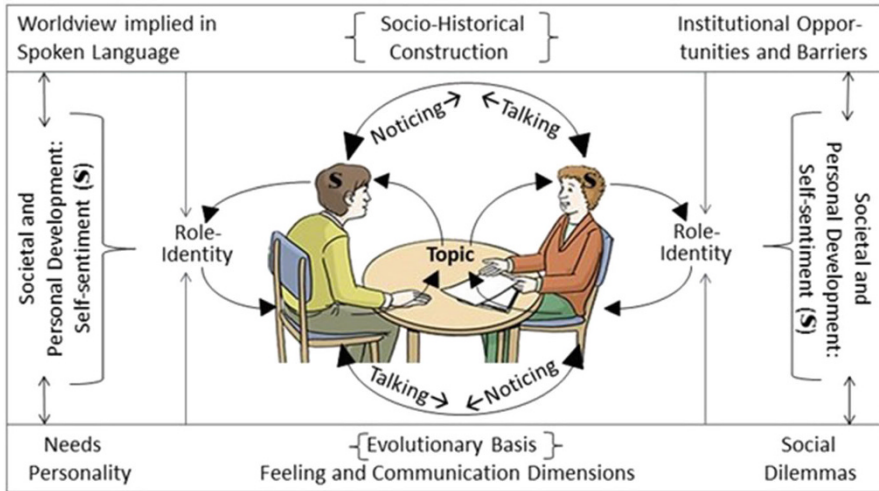
Fig. 2 Symbolic-interactionist communication model

anchored basic dimensions of *communion—power—activation*, depicted in Fig. 1. Also evolutionary given, people are regularly confronted with a kind of mutual dependency called *social dilemmas*, i.e., they must choose between the egotistic preference for their own well-being (or that of their own group) and the need to cooperate with others, which demands to consider the common benefit; such dilemmas shape the dynamics of communication. The possible manifestations of these dilemmas have the same three-dimensional structure as feelings and (non)-verbal communication. They are probably their evolutionary cause: (1) Common rewards suggest cooperation and create communion. But if results for one side are at the expense of the other, competition and hostility are more likely and are more difficult to manage constructively and fairly. (2) Asymmetric dilemma structures give one side more power, and such unequal power relations change the affective, cognitive, and intentional tendencies of the participants (Keltner et al., 2003). Within unequal power relations, the more powerful are often less cooperative (chapter "Power and Micropolitics as a Topic in Coaching"). (3) If there are larger differences in individual rewards, efforts to achieve good instead of bad results are stronger activated and arousal increases (Scholl, 2013). Finally, *personality traits* also have an evolutionary basis, corresponding to the three dimensions of feelings and dilemmas with extraversion as combination of power and communion, with agreeableness as combination of communion and lack of power, and with emotionality as related to activation (Asendorpf, 2007; Scholl, 2013). Together with *current needs,* they may especially affect the non-conventional part of role identities.

Based on societal, interpersonal, and individual development, every person has a relatively stable core self or self-sentiment as a specific combination within the three-dimensional emotional space (MacKinnon, 2015), consisting of self-esteem (valence-communion), self-efficacy (power, see Bandura, 1977) and self-activation

(activation, see also action versus situation orientation: Kuhl, 2001). The self-sentiment is conceptualized as the sediment of all prior experiences and it is seeking confirmation through the actually available role identities and their expression opportunities (MacKinnon & Heise, 2010; Swann & Bosson, 2008). Viewed in terms of Synergetics, a mathematical system theory, the self-sentiment is probably the most fundamental human attractor (Haken, 2006; chapter "System Theories as a Basis for Coaching"). It orders the chaotic abundance of perceptions and their processing toward this central core in the neuronal networks in order to ask and ascertain: "Is this how I really am?" and to check whether "the current role expectations, a further important attractor, enables or disables a role-identity which confirms who I really am?" A skillful, sometimes unconscious choice of roles, role partners, and suitable topics offers the opportunity to confirm and expand one's self-sentiment through a successful presentation of role identities that fit the situation or compensate for unsuccessful previous presentations (Wicklund & Gollwitzer, 1982). Content and relationship aspects, therefore, influence each other mutually; in coaching, both can be addressed in their intertwining and alternative opportunities can be explored. Unfortunately, this tendency toward confirmation of the self-sentiment (self-verification in psychology: Swann & Bosson, 2008) also applies to low self-esteem, weak self-efficacy, and/or blocked self-activation in the self-sentiment, which makes positive changes for these persons very difficult and sometimes only possible through long-term therapy; coaches should be aware of this possibility.

The verbal communication between persons is primarily sequential, while non-verbal communication takes place simultaneously by all involved: Every second, attention, utterances, requests for responses, understanding or its opposite or even disinterest are signaled non-verbally as well as the emotional significance of the noticed content and the current status of the relationship. Within the brains of the involved persons, internal cognitive, affective, and embodied *registration processes* take place, which are often performed unconsciously and routinely (Brauner, 1994). Persons can reflect within seconds their own role identity A(A), the assumed role identity of the other A(B), and the generalized other (Mead, 1934), i.e., the social norms A(N) as well as—by taking the perspective of the speakers—how they seem to see my role identity A[B(A)] and their role identity A[B(B)]. A similar registration process takes place—primarily cognitively—regarding own knowledge about the topic under consideration $A(K_A)$ and the presumed knowledge of the others $A(K_B)$, as well as the corresponding perspective taken, i.e., how the other persons appear to assess their own $A[B(K_B)]$ and my knowledge $A[B(K_A)]$. Only if these perspective-taking functions work relatively well, the mutual statements can be meaningfully tailored to one another and run smoothly (Laing et al., 1966).

With these registration processes, *action generation processes* alternate, in which the desired role identities of oneself and the other(s) are reflected, and the possibilities for shaping the situation as well as the next statements and actions together with the expected reactions (Brauner, 1994). The first result is *intrapersonal* feedback from a comparison of the desired development with the registered situation; this leads to a decision on the communicative action (small circle around each person in

Fig. 2), while the reactions of the other person provide *interpersonal* feedback (large circle between the participants). The complexity of these communication accomplishments is extremely high, because, in addition to the mental activation of one's own views, assumptions about the views of the other persons in all these points must be made again and again in order to guess what one could meaningfully express next in order to achieve the desired effect: What does she know, where can I start? What does she not know, what do I need to elaborate on? She does not seem to agree with me. What can I do to convince her? How does she see me? How would she estimate me when she finds out that I...? And how does she want to be seen? Mostly, one relies on proven default values and checks only partial aspects, and even then people are hardly aware of these lickety-split processes.

Deeper reflection often only begins when unpleasant feelings arise, when apparently something goes wrong. In the conversation itself, however, time and memory capacity are often not sufficient for a more thorough reflection, and so habitualized reaction patterns come up, which may aggravate the emerging dissent and relationship problem. Good examples are the five communication patterns of *blaming, placating, computing, distracting,* and *leveling* (Satir, 1983), with which people try to deflect attending to their own problems. Coaching offers a professionally supported opportunity for the necessary reflection. As the complexity of the external influencing factors and the internal mental processes indicates, this reflection can stimulate long and complicated analyses. Clients who open themselves in coaching can understand their communication processes and problems increasingly better and become more reflective of the role context.

Tensions *between* those involved often arise from a tendency to boost their self-sentiment, as many people consider themselves to be above average capable and good in relation to their peer group, and they tend to soften or ignore their own weak points (McCall & Simmons, 1978; Shepperd et al., 2008). On the one hand, this can lead to status conflicts if the interlocutor does not confirm their role identity or, on the other hand, to distribution conflicts, if such overassessment leads to higher demands on shares. In addition, tensions *within* the participants between required (*ought self*), desired (*ideal self*), and enacted identity (*actual self*) lead to confirmation wishes, which bring new dynamics into the communication (self-discrepancy theory: Higgins, 1987; chapter "Self-Concept and Self-Discrepancies and their Significance in Coaching"; self-verification theory: Swann & Bosson, 2008).

Using the concept of role identities in coaching can also serve well to gain new possibilities of reflection about "the inner team." The members of the inner team are mental representations of one's different role identities, with which the actual problems can be viewed from different angles (Schulz von Thun, 1998). Mead (1934) already showed how children learn to put themselves in the shoes of others, early on in the play stage, playing another person, and later on in the game stage, changing back and forth between different roles. Coaching may offer a similar process in an advanced way by loosening their taken-for-granted role identities and by trying out new role-making opportunities.

Coach's Communication in Coaching

The role identity model illustrates the systemic and constructivist character of all communication: The posed role identities are influenced by counter-role expectations (captured by *role taking*) within the given social structure, the developed personality, and the actual dilemma situation, as well as by the concepts, assumptions, and language games relevant in this context. Since communicative acts usually correspond to these frameworks and expectations, the mental, behavioral, and institutional structures are in turn strengthened (Heise et al., 2015), which makes changes more difficult. Role-identity modifications, desired in coaching, can be accomplished through *role making,* which usually involves conventional and idiosyncratic parts. They may gain momentum if they can be strongly linked to the basic self-sentiment (MacKinnon, 2015). Yet, sometimes no way can be found for making own role aspirations and others' role expectations compatible; then, the only satisfactory alternative is to leave the actual position with its role demands and to give up some of the connected benefits for a new balance of losses and gains in new role-identities which better express the self-sentiment. It is not a rare event that coaching paid by the organization results in leaving this organization. Coaching will therefore always be about reflecting on the client's role expectations and their social context: How do they fit in with the self-sentiment? Which new opportunities can be found for an appropriate role design? Often in coaching, identities must be sensed and explored, which were questioned and got devaluing feedback and threatened the client's self-esteem, self-efficacy, or self-activation. Then, ways have to be developed to strengthen the self-sentiment and to reconcile it with the contextual demands through modifications of the role-identities in question.

The professional coach adopts a role identity of assisting the client to find own ways to explore and master the strange and sometimes overwhelming problems. This entails thoroughly taking the roles of the client *and* their role partners, mirrored in the reports of the client, through the report of their registration processes. With fine-tuned empathy toward the client's capacity, action generation considerations take place consciously and attentively: "*How can I respond to the client's statements, their role constellation, and their wishes?*" The coach puts their own identity needs aside and offers with *interpersonal* feedback an externalized *intrapersonal* feedback to the client to help self-reflection and change (cf. Fig. 2). Perspective and role-taking, respectively, in connection with a professional demeanor, e.g. congruence, unconditional positive regard, and empathy (Rogers, 1942), is the central service of the coach, which requires a lot of interpersonal experience, sufficient knowledge of the clients' typical role contexts, as well as a mindful consideration of reciprocal transference processes (chapter "Transference and Counter-Transference and Their Significance for Coaching"). In this way, a successful alliance in the coaching relationship will be resulting, indicated in the course of communication by synchrony, a predominantly unconscious non-verbal movement coordination associated with positively aroused effect (Tschacher et al., 2014). Synchrony develops unconsciously, and according to these authors, it results from self-organizing processes as

proposed by Synergetics (see above). The operating factors, however, remain in the dark. They entail probably increasing clarifications by tapping adequately the role identities in question and the client's self-sentiment. As an alter ego, the coach stimulates alternative registration processes and helps to explore promising action generation processes within the client's internal I–you dialogues (MacKinnon & Heise, 2010).

Applied to another coaching example: Bob asked for coaching with the general idea to develop his own personality and professional role. Together with the coach, he realized that he lacked an appreciative environment for his new ideas, i.e., Bob's role-making was not accepted. As this identity desire became successively clearer and his self-confidence became stronger in the course of the coaching, he spontaneously applied for another job (*just because I don't believe in it*)—before consulting with the coach. To his surprise, he was accepted and thanks to his good qualifications he made the leap to the next management level. Coaching was continued, this time with the desire to grow into the role of the newly appointed leader. Yet, in the next sessions, questions for exploring the requirements of the new role were evasively answered and the coaching climate became less positive, synchrony faded away. Bob sent non-verbal and then verbal stop-signals which were related to addressing "unpleasing things" with his subordinates. A 2-month break resulted and, in the resumed session, this disturbance first had to be cautiously addressed.

In this (unfinished) process, several identity aspects play an important role: In addition to his identity as a creative expert, Bob was accredited to the new identity of a manager which enlarged his behavioral scope. From focusing on his own routine and idea generation work, the focus now had to shift on discussing other ideas of his subordinates and on initiating a structure that eases collaborative decision-making and implementation. Much more important than before was competent conflict management instead of his tendency to avoid conflicts. The coach, too, had to change her personal role-identity from predominantly strengthening the client's expert identity to opening up the client and to encourage him to face his uncertainties. At the same time, the coach reflected her professional identity as a commitment to the client by securing her independence from the management style expectations of the organization although this organization sponsored the coaching and might commission a frame contract for further coaching sessions.

Since every role-identity and the self-sentiment can be intuitively grasped (or measured) within the three-dimensional emotional, communicative, and behavioral space (cf. the communication basics section), fine-tuned perspective-taking and empathy are of utmost importance for successful coaching. Sometimes, this is aggravated even for experienced coaches in their work with overly emotional or affectively isolated persons (Krause & Merten, 1999; Larsen & Diener, 1987).

Embodiment exercises are a good means to help clients to clarify their feelings (Schubert et al., 2008; Storch & Tschacher, 2016).

Communication in the Client's Everyday Relationships

The everyday communication of the client can become a topic in coaching in different ways. Clients sometimes have a very specific *style of communication,* linked to their enacted identity, which creates everyday problems. Schulz von Thun (1989) has described in detail eight styles, their backgrounds, systemic conditions, and their personal development possibilities. These styles can be placed within the behavioral circle of Fig. 1, which represents the interpersonal spectrum of personality (Jacobs & Scholl, 2005). All styles around the behavioral circle can have more extreme characteristics, next to these relatively normal ones, which lead to *interpersonal problems* (Horowitz, 1996). For example, a person with a needs-dependent style is experienced as very inhibited or shy (bottom center in Fig. 1), while the helping, overprotective style appears as overly interested and intrusive (top right in Fig. 1). All other styles can also be classified accordingly within the circle of Fig. 1. Schulz von Thun (1989) is a valuable source for each of these styles but does not refer to the corresponding circumplex research. For coaching training and for experiential learning, it is important to know that already normal personality traits around the behavioral circle can be recognized to some extent just by their non-verbal signals (Gifford, 1994).

It should also be noted that a specific communication style does not have to be a personal expression, but can also originate from the organizational culture: The coaching of a teacher focused on her role-identity as a member of a project group about organizational development in the school. Apparently, all sides made the effort and yet there was no progress. Only after very detailed descriptions of several experienced episodes did it become clear that the teachers communicated with each other in a kind of teacher–student mode and judged their contributions according to right or wrong; on the one hand, they were always on guard against saying anything *wrong,* and on the other hand they paid heed if others seemed to say something *wrong*. This organizational communication style blocked ideas early on and limited progress.

Factual communication problems, originating for instance from disciplinary or experiential blinkers, can be a topic in coaching. A coach will therefore have to try to broaden the client's perspectives, cautiously creating inconsistencies that stimulate thinking out of the personal box. The client will be receptive if a positive work alliance has been formed before (predicted by Heider's Balance Theory, 1946). But the exploration can be hindered by certain background assumptions of the client and

the coach can help him out better if he himself has more comprehensive and differentiated views of human and organizational processes and can better assess their respective probabilities and limits (see chapter "Metaphors of 'Organization' and their Meaning in Coaching"). Even though coaching is primarily about activating the client's own resources, which include their professional knowledge, a step-by-step expansion of this knowledge by the coach can be very helpful. As a result, coaches should continuously and critically review their own knowledge base and expand it with the help of new experiences from other coaching sessions and new findings from research (which this book is intended to help them do). However, this does not imply that the coach should change to an expert mode and give specific advice.

Communication problems in organizations often develop into *information pathologies*, which have their origin in individual and/or social information processing peculiarities. Typical examples are departmental egotisms and stereotypes (see the introductory example), whitewashing of negative aspects in upward communication to avoid negative attributions about oneself, as well as the lack of sufficient explanations in downward communication to secure superior power through information advantages. Because of scarce space, the range of information pathologies, their explication, and possible remedies cannot be dealt with here. Empirical research and many examples can be found in Wilensky (1967) and Scholl (1999, 2004).

Communication is such a huge topic that further facets cannot be discussed here in detail. A special focus was necessary which was chosen around the self, especially the self's role-identities and the steering self-sentiment, which may be seen as the "true" self. The bulk of the problems, which clients bring (with them) to coaching, has probably strong connections to these self-aspects.

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Complex Problem-Solving in Coaching

Ulrike Starker and Jutta Müller

Introduction

Our everyday life constantly demands action and thus decisions in complex situations, without us being aware of this: "where do I shop?" "what do I eat for lunch?" These and similar questions, while on the surface are easy to solve, are accompanied by uncertainties on a deeper level, because they are related to (vital) areas such as health, financial, and resources. This complexity, even the mention of the term, triggers a reaction—uncertainty! But why? Complexity signals "uncontrollability": overload of our information processing channels, overstraining of our own resources, failure to grasp conventional approaches, loss of the full picture, experience of helplessness, and sinking into chaos. This mobilizes emergency reactions in our mental system such as blind action, simplification, encapsulation, isolation, blind pursuit of prescriptions, or even simply escape.

This is precisely the challenge: to overcome the spontaneous impulses for action and to develop strategies for this type of complex situation—not only crises but also everyday problems. However, this often only becomes conscious when something does not work, i.e., when a "problem" has arisen.

What is a problem? What means: solve? First of all, a linguistic-historical approach: the word problem comes from the Greek ("problema") and denotes what is presented, which applies in two senses to the approach of the authors: a topic, usually a structure of representations and assumptions, is brought into the coaching as a question to be solved, i.e., it is introduced or preceded—in terms of time—by the process. At the same time, it becomes an idea of what needs to be solved. Therefore, the problem definition and its transformation in the course of the coaching is already part of the solution process, as will be described.

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The etymology of the Germanic verb "to solve" is also meaningful in this context: the original meaning of "to loosen, to free" refers to the desire of the client to free himself from a problem. As special uses develop: "annul, declare void", which indicates a solution not by disappearance but by relativization through a change of perspective. The meaning "let it dissolve, make it fluid" includes the approach to bring an often-frozen view of the problem into motion through divergence, to make it supple (Kluge, 1960).

Case Study

A 50-year-old director of a church institution, Judith, comes to coaching with the aim of starting her new role positively from the very beginning. She left a job in another city because she was "gone" there. She is inspired by the desire to create a new beginning and radiates enthusiasm. In the course of the coaching, it became clear that the job profile of the new post created in the institution was not clearly defined. A co-sponsor of the institution had decided to withdraw from active leadership. Judith is supposed to perform pastoral tasks in the leadership, which she was quite capable of undertaking. However, not everyone has been included in this decision. At the same time, the bishop has demanded that the institution be managed on a more businesslike approach. It quickly becomes clear that the new task brings with it many challenges that are accompanied by personal conflicts. People are blamed. In coaching, these topics are initially dealt with, but little is achieved. A pattern emerges: while Judith usually leaves the session with optimism and actions, but the next time reports a lack of success. These reports are accompanied by statements such as: "Well then I'll just go and make myself independent!" It turned out that the desire to work as a supervisor had existed for a long time, and here, too, the prerequisites were given by the training. While at first, the topic seemed to have the function of distancing inwardly from dealing with the complex issues of the new position, it was later possible to expand the coaching objective to such an extent that the question of possible freelance work could be seriously considered. Judith decided to start working 1 day a week, outside of her church leadership role in a charity. While the complexity of the issues in the church remained, the charity work provided an escape to fulfill her needs for greater flexibility in her work.

The case study illustrates how organizational and individual perspectives differ in dealing with complexity. Complexity in an organization is managed through the cooperation of people. The basis for this is provided by rules that have grown historically in the organization. The individual has to deal with these rules through a cooperative process but does so in relation to goals that are not identical with those of the organization. They are subject to psychological mechanisms of individual action in dealing with complex problems that function independently of the organization. In addition, as in the case study, the client's view of the problem extends beyond the organization to its wider stakeholders.

Dealing with indeterminate and dynamic problems has long been the subject of research in general and applied psychology and partner disciplines (Dörner, 2001; Funke, 2003; Starker, 2012; Hacker & Sachse, 2014; von der Weth, 2001; Schönwandt et al., 2011). It has been shown that complex problems require indeterminate planning and decision-making, if only because there are no reliable procedures for solving them (Dörner, 2001). This has a stressful effect—although with varying degrees of intensity from individual to individual—and often leads to typical errors of action, which have been proven both experimentally (Dörner, 2001) and in practice (Strohschneider & von der Weth, 2002). In the following, we will discuss the requirements for dealing with complex problems and which behaviors are considered to be goal-oriented. This will be compared with what is already being done or possibly still to be done in coaching, as examples of important requirements.

Systematizing the Requirements of Complex Problems

Clients come to coaching with a desire to solve problems, often with the idea that a solution can be provided on request. In the process-based understanding of coaching, a solution, if it is to prove viable in the reality of the client, is to develop out of the situation with the individual. Here, the concept of complexity is fundamental for the authors in order to take into account the components of situations and individuals involved.

What Does Complexity Mean from a Scientific Point of View?

In complexity research, "complexity" is defined by a "large number of participating determinants," their "interconnectedness," an "intrinsically dynamic event," "intransparency," and "polytelicity" (Dörner, 2001; Funke, 2003). This means that the sometimes-unmanageable number of influencing variables leads to multi-causalities, which arise due to the *networking of many interrelationships.* Against this background, the *side effects* of the action must be taken into account, small steps must be taken to record effects and, if necessary, to be able to row back. The fact that several objectives ("*polytelie*"), sometimes even contradictory, usually have to be pursued at the same time, requires careful concretization and balancing of the objectives. In addition, many *conditions* cannot be known at all, are "*non-transparent*". The idea that if you knew everything, you could make the right decisions is often an illusion. Having all the information does not necessarily mean having understood something. Entrepreneurs, for example, often have to make *decisions in uncertain situations.* Aware that they do not know everything anyway, they adopt strategies that take this into account. As one study has shown (Starker, 2012), it is often not even a question of the one "right" strategy, but rather it is important to *coordinate different steps with each other* and, in doing so, to always carefully select

the steps from alternative options that are most suitable for the respective situation. Entrepreneurs describe this as "setting up a broad base."

Behaviors can be "right" or "wrong" against the background of different strategies, depending on the current constellation of conditions, the strategic embedding, and of course the right time: things sometimes change without action. Entrepreneurs are generally aware of the inherent dynamics of complex events. They also know that you cannot know everything at all times and usually include this in their actions. Nevertheless, it happens again and again that the psychological mechanisms of limited information processing capacity, the need for consistency in human beings, self-serving information processing, and various tendencies of social influence, from the need for agreement (Festinger, 1954) to the exercise of power, make it difficult to act in complex environments. Coaching can help.

In Coaching

Although the initial problem definition is acceptable at first, it should be considered a working definition. The coach accompanies the client into the unpicking of the problem, exploring and expanding understanding (methodically, for example, through visualizations and other creative methods that promote divergence) and into the setting of specific goals; procedural models already exist for this (Greif, 2008). More important than individual techniques, however, seems to be the coach's attitude, which Buchinger calls "expertise of not knowing" (Buchinger, 1998, p. 147 ff). At the same time, it can be a model for the client, relieving them of the need to know everything. This requires the coach not to be seduced by the expectation of knowing the solution or working on quick solutions, but to consider uncertainty as an integral part of the solution process.

Making Emotions Productive

The role of emotions proves to be significant. Not only do self-confidence and self-assurance correlate positively with problem-solving success, but the ability to manage emotions can provide the context for solutions to emerge. Anger, fear, joy, contentment, all these denote different modalities of our mental system and are accompanied by typical thought and action characteristics (Starker, 2012). Emotions should not be switched off but can be used in a managed way. It is not about keeping a cool head all the time. Rather, it is important to recognize which mood is created and which emotion may place the individual in the best position to respond. The frog in the butter churn kicked like mad to regain the ground under his feet. For this, the sheer desperation and panic were important, and contributed to the reaction of the butter.

But it may also be necessary to put yourself in a contemplative mood and to reflect, even when the burning is burning. Crisis managers know how to do this. They have mastered the art of recognizing which mood is conducive and how to use emotional regulation to best effect. This can also be trained through the targeted confrontation with complex situations in combination with reflection. However, emotions can also lead to the establishment of negative emotional processes that undermine productive problem-solving behavior and further reinforce it through the resulting failure experiences (Starker & von der Weth, 2014).

In Coaching

Here it is important to support the development of emotional awareness, to give them space to experience the emotion without getting lost in the emotion and to manage them as a component of productive problem-solving. The basic prerequisite is that the coaches know their own feelings and distinguish them from those of the clients. The coach is also able to support clients in dealing with their own (see Greif, 2008).

Another reason for the difficulty in accepting complex interrelationships is the competence protection mechanisms that maintain self-efficacy (Strohschneider & von der Weth, 2002). To remain capable of action, a certain sense of control is necessary (Flammer, 1990). Individuals may need to fade out or neglect aspects of their reality to focus on other aspects. This self-protection is often the reason for failure in complex systems. Connections that the client experiences as complex often lead to a feeling of loss of control and the resulting errors. Impulsive reactions are an example but maybe ill-considered and thus fail to restore long-term control. Only rarely does a solution emerge from this (Starker, 2012). Long-term solutions require building up solutions in teams, organizations, even states. Similar ideas can be found in Ashby's concept of "requisite variety" (Ashby, 1956) and the concept of "integrative complexity" (Driver & Streufert, 1969).

In this scenario coaching acts to strengthening the client's ability to act and at the same time helping clients covering and integrating blind spots. This requires the intimate relations and space of a coaching relationship, which can allow the client to place their feelings of a loss of control into a perspective appropriate. It also helps if the client sees their individual actions within a framework of cooperation. Dealing with uncertainty is then placed within a framework of trust delegation and control.

Unmask Thinking Traps

Human thinking, especially under stress, has a tendency to greatly *simplify* (Dörner, 2001; Kahneman, 2012). In problem-solving research, behavioral patterns in dealing with complex requirements such as the governance of a city or the management of a

company are often examined. This can be done using computer-simulated business games to analyze behavior (Dörner, 2001; Starker, 2012).

Complexity quickly overtaxes human cognitive resources, especially when it is not just individual decisions but dynamic, often *exponential developments* (Dörner, 2001; Kahneman, 2012). These at first begin insidiously and only later developed their full dynamics and can then no longer be controlled. In addition, many goals cannot always be logically linked and harmonized. Priorities must be set, but the goals (one's own and those of other actors) must still be kept in mind.

In Coaching

So far, the dynamics of coaching have perhaps been given too little consideration, even though the process character of coaching basically takes them into account and thus provides the (time) space for processing. Nevertheless, the time delays cause the clients problems, such as in the first example, when the solutions developed do not lead to immediate success. This quickly leads to solutions being rejected prematurely. Here it is up to the coach to take time dimensions into account, for example by developing possible, multidimensional future scenarios. The goal orientation in coaching as a central mechanism of action is undisputed (Schreyögg, 1995; Müller, 2006). Goal setting often takes up a considerable part of the process. First of all, it is a matter of putting a goal into words—and linking this to the original problem. This approach often reveals contradictions that have so far blocked solutions. One way to overcome this is through repeated questioning to challenge the certainties of the client, such as through question techniques that replace "why" with "how").

Hints for the Coaching Practice

What will be dealt with first in coaching is a complex problem. There is a risk the coach will influence the goal or action plan.

When dealing with complex situations, paying attention to the details, and adopting a helicopter perspective can often help. However, there is a risk of losing the overview, simplification is needed again. It is a matter of moving between these two points.

The extent to which coaching follows a long-term plan also varies. Complex requirements are characterized by very different levels of clarity in the expectation horizon. Accordingly, extensive and long-term problems can be dealt with using the classical strategic approach to problem-solving (Schönwandt et al., 2011).

Table 1 illustrates the behavioral patterns and the underlying dynamics of the problem-solving behavior, and related coaching approaches.

Table 1 Typical sources of error in dealing with complexity and its avoidance in coaching

Dangers and errors in dealing with complex realities	Characteristics of the behavior	Psycho-dynamics	Possible approaches in coaching
Inch pinching	Get lost in the details	Uncertainty and feeling of being overwhelmed	Use goal orientation as a measure of action, accompany prioritization
Extensive situation analysis	Meticulous description of the actual state without consideration of the active factors	Uncertainty	View possible solutions on a timeline, Sample treatment
Encapsulation	Concentration on irrelevant sub-area	Protection of self-esteem	To direct and visualize the view of the entire condition structure, to clarify the protective function
Non-consideration of side effects and remote effects	Attention is paid to only one aspect	Thinking in simple causal relationships	Visualize the entire system, e.g., use a timeline in the network image (see above), ask for correlations
Rumpelstiltskin effect	Overplanning, no consideration of possible friction	Protection of the sense of competence	Trial treatment, deliberately taking small risks, paradoxical interventions: "*How could anything else go wrong?*"
Lack of target laboratory	Too rough a target *"It's supposed to get better"*	Uncertainty and self-esteem protection	"Miracle question," precise coloring of the target state, also with side effects
Linear forecasts	The more, the more	Reduction of complexity	Creating a network
"Push-away" targets (Simon, 1964)	Characterization of situations to be avoided instead of goal orientation	Lack of creative thinking under great pressure to act	"crystal ball" technique, with which target states should be as concrete as possible
Affirmative perception	Only valid information is included	Uncertainty	Working with polarities, giving space to the negative pole, "advocatus diaboli"...
More of the wrong thing	Ignore first failures and double efforts	Self-worth protection, painting difficulties in retreat	Based on the target picture, develop an evaluation scheme for steps toward the goal
Repair service behavior	Obvious problems are solved without dealing with the basic problems behind them	Helplessness	Looking at behavior on a timeline, illustrating patterns, making bio-graphic structures conscious...

Conclusion

On the coaching market, simple solutions are very popular. The coach delivers transformational change. The problem is solved. However, the reality is problem-solving is complex and unpleasant. The coach is only one element within a system, with multiple factors outside of their control. Success develops slowly and usually results from a wealth of actions at the individual, team, and organizational level.

It is important to recognize complex problems are complex. Failure is not a reflection of the individual's competence alone. To counter complexity requires emotional regulation, clear thinking, and experience and knowledge in dealing with complexity. While coaching clients in the midst of complex problems do not show quick effects, but can in time contribute to sustainable outcomes.

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Conflict Transformation in Coaching

Albert Vollmer and Ariane Vetter

Case Study

Simon desperately comes into the coaching session. Since the company where he works switched to agile teams in software development, one conflict has followed the next. The decision-making process in the teams often leads to fierce arguments because no agreement can be reached. The frequent meetings are grueling, because of the breathtaking speed at which everything has to be produced. Mistakes creep in and people look for culprits. The Scrum master still sees himself as the boss. Customer contact is difficult to communicate. This form of teamwork was highly praised in advance. How should Simon, as head of the software development department, deal with this situation?

Such or similar situations bring clients into coaching with the aim of getting support for what they should do. Mostly they have already tried things. However, they are often overwhelmed with the task of developing effective solutions and therefore seek help in coaching. This is exactly where coaching comes in. On the one hand, it has the task of creating understanding about the conflict situation and its origins. On the other hand, the aim is to help clients to develop suitable options for action for processing. In view of this, coaches need to know, and be able to apply, concepts from conflict research. Some of the central ones are presented below.

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Concepts from Conflict Research

A variety of concepts can be used to deal with conflicts. These relate to the conditions of emergence, conflict types, conflict processes, and forms of conflict management.

Definition of Conflict

Conflicts are understood as "a process that begin when an individual or group perceives differences and oppositions between itself and another individual or group about interests and resources, beliefs, values, or practices that matter to them" (De Dreu & Gelfand, 2008, p. 6). Which content is at issue is a matter of interpretation for the participants and must be developed in a concrete situation (Tjosvold, 2006). Nevertheless, concepts have become established in conflict research that distinguishes between various typical types of conflict that can be found specifically in the context of organizations. Before we turn to the question of which processes trigger conflicts, we first consider the conditions under which they arise.

Types of Conflict and Their Conditions of Origin

De Dreu and Gelfand (2008) assume three fundamental sources of conflict in organizations. These are related to basic human needs. First, there is a need for material security. Second, people strive for valid, socially shared, and connectable knowledge about the world. Thirdly, people have a need for a positive self-image and a positive social identity. This results in various basic types of conflict. Conflicts of interest (including conflicts of resources or distribution) arise from scarce resources (e.g., financial resources, infrastructure, promotion). Conflicts in relationships (including affective, emotional, or value conflicts) result from ideological and value-related differences that threaten self-image or social identity. Socio-cognitive conflicts (also factual conflicts or task conflicts) arise when knowledge of the world is not compatible between people, e.g., when there are different understandings of a subject. Similarly, Jehn and Mannix (2001) distinguish between task, relationship, and process conflicts. The latter type refers to the procedures for achieving objectives and includes aspects such as responsibilities and resource allocation. It thus partly corresponds to the conflict of interest described by De Dreu and Gelfand (2008). The concept of Jehn and Mannix (2001) has been widely empirically tested. While task conflicts should theoretically lead to positive results (performance, decision quality, creativity, innovation), studies do not prove this so clearly. These positive effects are indeed proven in studies. However, meta-analyses (De Wit et al.,

2012; O'Neill et al., 2013) show low and partly negative correlations, for example to team performance. According to most studies, relationship conflicts have negative effects, but contrary to most theoretical assumptions they can also have positive effects (Jehn et al., 2008). Furthermore, high correlations between task and relationship conflicts can be observed (De Dreu & Weingart, 2003). Loughry and Amason (2014) state that certain situational factors must be taken into account in order for task conflicts to have positive effects. Promoting factors appear to be, for example, a medium level of conflict intensity (De Dreu, 2006), a high degree of psychological security in the team (Edmondson, 1999), a low level of status conflicts (Bendersky & Hays, 2012), a relatively high proportion of task conflicts compared to process and relationship conflicts (De Wit et al., 2013a; Jehn & Chatman, 2000), and attributions of the source of the conflict (Vetter & Vollmer, 2019).

Common to all typologies is that individual types can be distinguished analytically. Concrete conflict situations usually represent a mixture of various dimensions. Conflicts of tasks never occur in their pure form, but always have an interest and a relationship component. The conflict types can even merge into each other over time. Conflicts over tasks can spill over into conflicts over relationships (Gebert, 2004), when the necessary trust between the parties involved dwindles, or when conflicts are badly handled (Simons & Peterson, 2000).

Conflict Processes

Intrapsychic Processes

In various process models (e.g., Thomas, 1976), triggering events form the beginning of conflicts. Events arise from the underlying conditions, which in turn are described as the potential for conflict (Glasl, 2013; Rüttinger & Sauer, 2000). Before a conflict is interpreted as such, processes of perception occur on an *emotional*, *cognitive* and *motivational* level. Interaction with the other conflict parties and interpretations by third parties also play a role in interpretation.

On an *emotional level,* individual behavior depends on whether the situation is characterized by fear, anxiety, anger, humiliation, guilt, or hope, and trust (Lindner, 2006), whether it is experienced as frustration (Thomas, 1976), threat or challenge. When people feel threatened, they tend to stick to their opinions rather than open themselves to new information, rather than feel challenged (De Wit et al., 2013b).

At the *cognitive level,* attribution processes play a central role. It is about the questions of why, what for, and the responsibility of one's own and others' actions. Action can be attributed to the person or to external circumstances (internal/external attribution), perceived as stable or variable, and categorized as intentional or unintentional (Weiner, 1995). Finally, attribution errors play into the interpretation and can complicate the conflict process. Thus, the causes of other people's actions are attributed more to their personality and less to situational circumstances (fundamental attribution error; Ross, 1977).

Depending on attribution and the expectation of the effectiveness of one's own actions, this leads to concrete behavior in the conflict situation. This can lead to different attributions between individuals and different interpretations of the same situation.

At the *motivational level,* it is about goal-oriented action, combined with the question of what a person should do in a conflict situation. According to Heckhausen and Heckhausen (2010), action first requires consideration processes, followed by action planning, action itself, and finally its evaluation on the basis of the consequences of the action. Situational and personal factors play together here. Conflict research has identified two types of social motives in personal motivational disposition: pro-social and pro-self (De Dreu, 2010). Their characteristics determine whether people act cooperatively or competitively. The social motives, for their part, are linked to conditions on a personal and situational level. Personal conditions are future orientation, inclination to trust, social value orientations, or basic motives according to performance, power, and connection. Situational conditions are the existing culture, reward structures, history, and social relations of the conflict partners. Studies show that prosocial motives are helpful for open-minded, unprejudiced discussions, which promotes constructive conflict resolution (De Dreu et al., 2000).

On the one hand, emotion, cognition, and motivation form analytical approaches to experience and behavior. On the other hand, in a conflict situation, they occur more or less simultaneously and often not in a particularly orderly manner. As part of interaction processes, individual experience and behavior is linked to that of other people. This reveals the intentions and strategies underlying action in a conflict situation.

Escalation Processes

How conflicts can escalate is shown by models like those of Glasl (2013) or Pruitt and Rubin (1986). They illustrate courses, dynamics, and psychological processes. What the so-called step models have in common is that they represent a sequence of increasing escalation. Typical developments, according to Pruitt and Rubin (1986), are the adoption of ever harder measures, the expansion of the resources employed, the tendency to move from specific problems to fundamental values, and the involvement of other actors. Glasl (2013) describes the increase of projections, restricted and simplistic thinking, the expansion of the subjects of dispute, the distortions of cause and effect, the increasing personification as well as the rise of the spiral of violence. This model comprises nine stages in stages from "win-win" to "win-lose" to "lose-lose."

Pruitt and Rubin (1986) describe three models that show basic escalation dynamics. The "aggressor-defender" model states that an aggressor wants to push through a goal that another person opposes. The aggressor takes increasingly harder measures to achieve his goal, whereupon the other person, in turn, mobilizes greater resistance.

The "conflict spiral" model postulates a sequence of actions and reactions, with tougher measures being taken on both sides. The model of "structural change" describes that conflicts lead to changes in the persons themselves and that these changes extend beyond the individual conflict. They become more angry, anxious, and emotional. This in turn affects the interactions and the prospects of ending a conflict.

Conflicts are not necessarily subject to escalation. According to Baros and Jaeger (2004), a linear, gradual escalation is not the rule. Rather, escalation also occurs by skipping stages or there are stagnation or de-escalation phases. The conflict parties can also act at different levels of escalation, i.e., one party can act in an escalating manner while the other party attempts to de-escalate. There are also examples of non-violent escalation when a party resolutely stands up for its cause and deliberately refrains from aggressive behavior. De-escalation is one of the main concerns of approaches to dealing constructively with conflicts.

Dealing with Conflicts

Conflict Management Strategies

The emotional, cognitive and motivational processing of a conflict situation described above leads to the behavior shown. This is where the so-called dual concern models come into play (Rahim, 2010; Thomas, 1976). In these, different conflict strategies are located, depending on how strongly a person's actions are oriented toward their own interests ("assertiveness") or toward those of another person ("cooperativeness"). Avoiding means neither the own interests nor those of the other party will be pursued. Competition means enforcing one's own interests is at the expense of the other party. In the event of accommodating, only the interests of the other party shall be taken into account. Collaborating means the consideration of the interests of both parties. A compromise is a partial consideration of both interests.

With these five conflict management strategies, persons in conflict situations have various options for dealing with the conflict. These place varying degrees of demands on communication and problem-solving skills. It is pointed out that there is no one best solution, but that the conflict strategy must be determined according to the situation. In a conflict situation, different conflict strategies are usually involved, which can also change over time (Van de Vliert, 2004). Nevertheless, studies show quite clearly that conflict strategies that take the interests of both parties equally into account, i.e., compromise and integration, are positively associated with team performance and satisfaction in relationships (Rahim, 2010) as well as with innovation (Scholl, 2009; Vollmer, 2015). Intercultural studies show that in collectivist cultures avoidance, compromise and integration are preferred, whereas in individualistic cultures enforcement is preferred (Holt & De Vore, 2005). There is also

evidence that conflict management styles between members of different cultures
have adapted over time (Adair & Brett, 2004).

Methods of Conflict Management

In conflict research and practice, a variety of approaches to dealing with conflicts
have been developed. The term conflict management has become widely established
(e.g., Ayoko et al., 2014; Glasl, 2013), under which aspects such as conflict
regulation, conflict resolution, or conflict transformation are summarized.

We will deal with three procedures that occupy a prominent position in the
practical handling of organizational conflicts as well as in research and are closely
related to the conflict types described: Negotiation, mediation, and constructive
controversy.

A *negotiation* is a social interaction in which two or more parties discuss actual or
perceived differences in their interests with the aim of seeking a solution accepted by
all parties involved (Pruitt & Carnevale, 1993). Examples are wage negotiations or
performance agreements. The focus on interests also underlies the original model of
negotiation, the Harvard model (Fisher et al., 2004). Basic concepts in negotiation
research are integrative ("win-win") vs. distributive ("win-lose") negotiation situa-
tions, cooperative vs. competitive behavior, individual vs. collective as well as
tangible vs. relationship-related outcomes (Lewicki et al., 1998). An overview of
this is provided by the Integrative Phase Model of Negotiation (Hüffmeier & Hertel,
2012), which links negotiation processes and empirical findings from research.
Negotiation covers a spectrum ranging from everyday decisions to international
crises.

Mediation is a procedure for settling predominantly relationship conflicts. Here, a
mediator plays the role of an all-party process support, which helps the parties to find
a substantive solution (Montada & Kals, 2007). It is described as a form of out-of-
court dispute resolution and is distinguished from other out-of-court procedures such
as arbitration. Mediation addresses a broad spectrum of conflict types, with conflicts
of interest and relationship conflicts playing a prominent role (Kals & Ittner, 2008).
Working on a damaged relationship between quarreling parties, whether in the form
of loss of trust, hostility, or disappointed expectations, is often crucial (Lewicki et al.,
1998). Accordingly, the inclusion of emotions is important (Montada & Kals, 2007).
The cornerstones of psychological mediation are voluntariness, personal responsi-
bility, equal opportunities, win-win solutions, relationship maintenance, and coop-
eration. Although there is no standardized procedure, a process model with different
stages has been established: Preparation, conflict analysis, conflict management,
mediation agreement, and evaluation (Kals & Ittner, 2008). For business mediation,
studies have shown positive results in terms of effectiveness and efficiency, espe-
cially in comparison with court proceedings (Disselkamp, 2004).

Constructive controversy exists "when one person's ideas, information, conclu-
sions, theories, and opinions incompatible with those of another, and the two must

seek an agreement that reflects their best reasoned judgement" (Johnson 2015, p. 26). This method focuses primarily on the socio-cognitive conflict (De Dreu & Gelfand, 2008). An example of this is whether an individual or group bonus is paid out in a team. In a step-by-step procedure, these alternative courses of action are subjected to a weighing process. Key features are the advocacy principle, rational argumentation, change of perspectives, and integrative decision-making. This primarily sets a learning process in motion. The guiding principle is a solution that can be justified objectively and is socially supported. The method is theoretically well founded (Johnson, 2015). Studies in school and organizational contexts prove their effectiveness in terms of decision quality, creativity, productivity, innovation, learning, and relationship quality (Johnson, 2015; Vollmer et al., 2015; Vollmer & Seyr, 2013).

These three procedures have a recognizable connection to the basic types of conflict in organizations. Although the three procedures each focus on factual issues and social relations, negotiation refers primarily to conflicts of interest, and constructive controversy primarily to socio-cognitive conflicts. Mediation addresses primarily relationship conflicts. What they all have in common is the achievement of constructive solutions by means of structured procedures involving the parties. The strategies and methods used are partly similar. Given the experience that the different conflict types occur in the same conflict situation, it is not surprising that in practice the various methods are also used in combination.

Application of Practical Methods in Coaching

Conflicts require systematic handling in coaching. The task for the coach is to first generate an understanding of the conflict situation. This means carrying out an analysis taking into account the history of origins, conflict types, processes, and organizational roles. The Vollmer model (2012) is suitable for this purpose and provides guidance for a comprehensive analysis and diagnosis. It is the basis for the derivation of options for action, which include various conflict management strategies and methods of conflict management. The following intervention strategies offer orientation.

Preventive interventions are supposed to help to avoid the outbreak of conflicts by identifying and reducing conflict potential. This also includes measures such as training in communication and conflict management as well as contractual arrangements. *Curative interventions* are used to deal with already existing conflicts. They aim to restore the ability of individuals and teams to work. *Prospective interventions* are designed to bring about change by using conflict as a starting point for integrative solutions, high-quality decisions, and for innovative ideas. Here, the creative potential of conflicts is to be worked out by understanding different opinions not as a threat, but as a learning opportunity. Last but not least, coaches must assess whether other specialists should be called in for conflict management, for example in the areas of mediation, moderation, organizational development, or negotiation.

In this way, the situation described at the beginning can also be analyzed. With an expanded understanding through new perspectives on how psychological conflict concepts make them possible, it is then easier to assess which measures will defuse the situation, where can unnecessary conflict potential be reduced (e.g., formulate clear role definitions), where is it about getting back to work (e.g., by methodical support in decision-making), and how can creative solutions be found (e.g., by stimulating and integrating different perspectives). It might be worthwhile to engage someone from the organizational development department as a facilitator.

Conclusion

The concepts and methods presented from the field of conflict research help structuring and processing practical cases. They broaden the knowledge of coaches and the possibilities of application. They can be developed and acquired by means of an in-depth examination of relevant specialist literature and qualified further training.

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Crises as a Problem in Coaching

Johannes Sperling, Andrea Augustin, and Jürgen Wegge

Case Study

Matthew is a 55-year-old entrepreneur in the construction industry who finds himself in an increasingly critical situation due to a decline in orders. His failure to make clear decisions adds to his problems. When the situation becomes more serious, he fails to seek support also because he is ashamed of how the business has declined. Finally, the situation develops into a crisis because of late payments by a major customer. His company is threatened with insolvency. He can hardly think straight and feels paralyzed. The threatening situation leads to sleep problems further impairing his performance.

Definition and Characteristics of Crises

There are different perspectives on the concept of *crisis* from different disciplines. Originally, the term is used in medicine, where the term "*crisis*" describes the climax and turning point of an illness. In the psychiatric or psychotherapeutic perspective, clinically relevant psychological effects of crisis situations are treated (Möller, 2016). In the eighteenth century, the term *crisis* is used in the sense of a decision and turning point or a difficult, dangerous situation. In the economic context, corporate crises refer to situations where the survival of a company is threatened.

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Krystek and Lenz (2014, p. 33) name five essential characteristics of crises:

- "the threat to existence by endangering dominant targets,
- the ambivalence of the outcome (metamorphosis or destruction),
- the process character as a time limit for the crisis process,
- the control problems in the sense of only limited ability to influence survival-critical processes, and
- the progressive loss of options for action in the crisis process."

Both stress and crises pose a threat and exceed the individuals' immediate possibilities of successful coping. However, crises have a special intensity and quality, as opposed to mere stress. They include either a quantitatively stronger threat or a threat to what the individual perceives as goals that are very important. With regard to the overburdening in the coping process, a crisis may involve greater complexity and in particular a progressive, cumulative course. However, making a clear distinction between stress and crisis is not easy.

In coaching, it is possible to distinguish between crisis situations of a company, which are especially addressed in change management (Bickerich & Michel, 2016), and the crisis situation of an individual person, such as a manager. If the threat to the company is also an existential threat to the client, then both types of crisis are present at the same time. This situation is particularly acute, for example, for managing directors of small companies threatened with insolvency, as in the case study at the start of the chapter. The following section focus on the individual effects of crisis situations.

Impact of Crises

A crisis is a complex stress situation that has an impact on many areas due to the intensity of the threat and the excessive coping demands described above. Based on Kaluza (2015) these effects can be considered on three central levels, (a) the physiological or regenerative level, (b) the cognitive-emotional level, and (c) the behavioral or instrumental level (see Fig. 1).

Physiological Effects

The stresses associated with a crisis can lead to sleep disorders and a cumulatively accumulated discrepancy between individual sleep needs and the actual amount of recovery sleep received (Van Dongen et al., 2003). The continuous stress situation, mediated by sleep deficits, can severely impair the functioning of autonomous, neuroendocrine, metabolic, and immunological systems. In this context, an increase in heart rate and blood pressure as well as changes in immune functions, such as chronic subliminal inflammatory reactions, has been observed (Banks & Dinges,

Fig. 1 Levels of impact and intervention in crises

cognitive-emotional

behavioral-instrumental

physiological-regenerative
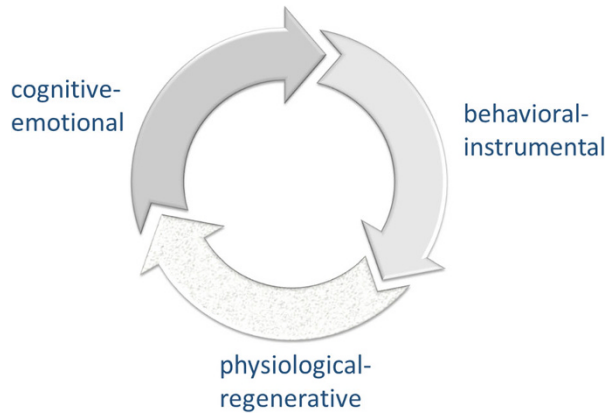
2007; Meier-Ewert et al., 2004). Furthermore, sleep deprivation leads to significantly impaired cognitive performance (Pilcher & Huffcutt, 1996; Lim & Dinges, 2010).

Cognitive Effects

The hormonal stress response affects the hippocampal formation and the prefrontal cortex (PFC) via the hypothalamic–pituitary–adrenal cortex axis (HHNA) and the resulting release of the stress hormone cortisol, thereby affecting the *executive functions* necessary for rational and strategic thinking and action. Acute stress is associated with impairments of working memory, cognitive flexibility, planning, and decision-making (McKlveen et al., 2015). The emotional tension, worries, and intrusive thoughts associated with crisis-related negative effects bind the cognitive resources available for decision-making processes and thus reduce further processing capacity (Resource Depletion; Eysenck & Calvo, 1992). Prolonged exposure of the prefrontal and mesotemporal brain structures with high cortisol levels can cause cognitive deficits (Staal, 2004).

Emotional Effects

Crisis situations are often associated with actual or impending losses. The resulting emotions can be compared to the feelings that follow the loss of a loved one (Cope, 2011; Shepherd et al., 2009) and include numbness, anger, guilt, shame, fatigue, anxiety, and depression (Shepherd, 2003; Ucbasaran et al., 2013). Feelings of being overtaxed or hopeless also result (Lobnig, 2002). For example, Singh et al. (2007) and Cope (2011) report that insolvent entrepreneurs experience fear, panic, and

anger in addition to physiological impairments (e.g., exhaustion, high blood pressure, sleep problems, and weight loss).

Effects on Self-Regulation or Self-Leadership

Self-regulation, defined as the ability to achieve one's own goals in a self-determined manner and to monitor one's own action strategies in this regard (Wiese, 2008), can also be impaired by a crisis situation. Adequate control and influencing of one's own behavior through specific cognitive and behavior-focused strategies (self-leadership; Manz & Neck, 2004) is thus no longer possible. This includes in particular restrictions on goal setting, action planning, and emotional self-reinforcement. Work stress is also associated with lower self-leadership (Dolbier et al., 2001).

Interventions for Crisis Management and Prevention

In the acute phase of a crisis, coaching for overcoming crises should first provide a cushion for the affected person in the sense of *defusing* (Mitchell & Everly, 2005). The client has room to talk and the coach pays special attention to real appreciation and full acceptance. When the client is *grounded*, interventions can follow that target all three levels of the stress model (Kaluza, 2015) mentioned above: the promotion of stress management (physiological-regenerative level), emotional competencies and constructive thinking (cognitive-emotional level), as well as self-leadership and problem solving (instrumental level).

Interventions at the Physiological-Regenerative Level

On the *physiological level,* the aim is to promote life energy and its regeneration as well as to manage stress (Greif, 2016). Thus, the balance of different life contents and activities is to review, be it the balance between mental and physical activities, between time with others and time for oneself, between compulsory and voluntary activities or between useful and pleasant activities (activity planning). As physical activity has a positive effect on health and stress reduction, regular sports activity can be encouraged. Clients can learn and practice relaxation techniques such as autogenic training and progressive muscle relaxation, and biofeedback can be used for this purpose. In recent years, mindfulness and meditative techniques have increasingly come into focus as methods of stress management (Bosch & Michel, 2016). Breaks also contribute to a good balance, with short breaks in particular being conducive to better recovery if they are used optimally (Wegge et al., 2014). To

promote regeneration during sleep, measures of sleep hygiene can help. Kaluza (2015) gives a detailed overview of methods for stress management.

Interventions at the Cognitive-Emotional Level

Interventions targeting the *cognitive-emotional level* aim to promote constructive thinking and a constructive handling of emotions and thus ultimately to positively change hindering, stress-increasing attitudes, and thought patterns. Such methods have been developed for cognitive therapy.

Promoting Constructive Thinking

An example of intervention at the cognitive level is Ellis' ABC model (according to Stavemann, 2003) for promoting positive thinking. It considers how to react to a situation based on individual beliefs. A distinction is made between the activating event (A), the beliefs (B), and the consequences or reactions of the individual at a behavioral, emotional, or cognitive level (C). People who are not familiar with such self-reflection often find it difficult. The ability to perceive and name your own feelings and thoughts can be developed in coaching and through exercises in everyday life.

Promoting Constructive Handling of Emotions

Another approach is the training of emotional competencies (TEK) according to Berking (2015), which includes techniques for dealing constructively with emotions (see also Zapf, 2016). It relies on muscle and breath tension techniques as well as techniques of mindfulness because in such a relaxed state thoughts and feelings are easier to perceive and to change. Building on mindful perception, you can apply competencies of emotion regulation, such as acceptance and tolerance of your feelings, self-support, and the analysis and regulation of emotional reactions. A key factor is the practice of self-compassion (Gilbert, 2013; Germer, 2015). In addition, specific strategies are offered, such as the *Use the Blues strategy*, in which one performs meaningful actions stimulated by the emotion (e.g., seeking support), the *Opposite Action strategy*, in which one consciously performs actions that are opposite to those that would have been stimulated by the emotion (e.g., being nice when angry), and the *Distraction Strategy*, in which one uses an activity to distract *oneself.*

Intervention at the Instrumental Level

The aim of instrumental stress management is to reduce or eliminate the stressors themselves. Instrumental stress management focuses on skills to change the stress situation. Examples include delegating work tasks, optimizing personal time planning, or structuring tasks. In coaching, the promotion of self-management, self-leadership, and problem solving is particularly useful, for which possible interventions are presented below.

Self-Management and Self-Leadership

Various interventions have been developed aiming to promote *self-management* or *self-leadership* (also self-regulation, action regulation; see Benecke, 2016) (see Table 1).

The cognitive-behavioral approach of self-management therapy (Kanfer et al., 2012) starts with a comprehensive self-observation, behavioral and condition analysis, and goal clarification, then implements various techniques for self-reinforcement, self-punishment, and stimulus control, and finally teaches self-management as an overarching process or metacognitive strategy.

Self-leadership approaches (Neck & Manz, 1996; Müller & Braun, 2009; Müller, 2014) also promote techniques for self-observation, self-reinforcement, self-punishment, and stimulus control. In addition, strategies for self-verbalization, mental trial and error and anticipation, the promotion of constructive thinking, and a focus on intrinsically motivating aspects of an activity are included in self-leadership trainings.

The Zurich Resource Model (ZRM; Storch & Krause, 2014), which is based on the resource-oriented approach of humanistic psychology and the Rubicon model, also uses techniques such as self-verbalization. The personal scope of action is to be expanded by activating and developing one's own resources (such as memory aids, if-then plans). The approach of the CRM is applied in trainings and in individual coaching (Krause & Storch, 2006; Storch & Weber, 2016; Weber & Storch, 2016).

There are also other self-management approaches. The field of research on executive functions, for example, in connection with ADHD, has produced approaches to promote executive functions and self-regulation (Meltzer, 2014; Walk & Evers, 2013). In addition, within the framework of the so-called *third wave of* Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, approaches have been developed that deal with the awareness and effective management of different personality components, so to speak inner team members (Coaching with the "inner team"; Schulz von Thun, 1998; Schulz von Thun & Stegemann, 2004; Schematherapeutic Coaching Approaches; Migge, 2013). Especially for the long-term improvement of self-management, approaches to personality development are particularly useful (Specht & Gerstorf, 2016).

Table 1 Intervention concepts to improve self-management and self-leadership

Concept	Functionality
Self-management therapy (Kanfer et al., 2012)	– Comprehensive self-observation, analysis of behavior and conditions, and clarification of objectives – Techniques for self-reinforcement, self-punishment, and stimulus control
Self-leadership training (Neck & Manz, 1996; Müller & Braun, 2009; Müller, 2014)	– Techniques for self-observation, self-reinforcement, self-punishment, and stimulus control, – for self-verbalization, mental trial and error and anticipation, – to promote constructive thinking and to focus on intrinsically motivating aspects of an activity
Zurich Resources Model CRM (Stork & Krause, 2014)	– Techniques for clarifying your own values and goals, – Development of a target-oriented resource pool – Use of reminder aids, planning of actions by means of if-then plans, planning of dealing with anticipated obstacles
Trainings to promote executive functions and self-regulation (Meltzer, 2014; Walk & Evers, 2013)	– Use of games, worksheets, PC software – Practice of attention, memory techniques, self-verbalization techniques, and metacognitive strategies
Self-management as leadership of the "inner team" (Schulz von Thun, 1998; Schulz von Thun & Stegemann, 2004) and inner schemata (Migge, 2013)	– Recognition of different personality parts and their thoughts, feelings, wishes – Promotion of the goal-oriented handling of the personality parts, e.g. in the sense of an inner conflict management – Transfer of techniques of leadership, education, moderation, and mediation to the "inner team"

Concrete Problem-Based Measures

Concrete, problem-related measures are decisive for overcoming a crisis. Thus, possible solutions and decisions can be developed and supported directly in coaching.

To promote systematic problem solving, the training approach of D'Zurilla and Nezu (2007) can be used. A problem is solved in several steps. First, the problem is explored and a collection of ideas for possible solutions is made. Then the ideas found are evaluated, the best option is worked out and its implementation is planned.

The decision difficulties that arise in a crisis can be handled with a decision matrix (Saaty & Vargas, 2012). Client and coach look for criteria that are essential for the decision. These criteria are evaluated for each of the alternatives. A summary

evaluation of the assessments, if necessary, taking into account different weightings of the criteria, leads to the determination of the best alternative.

Problem-related measures interact with the interventions at the above-mentioned fundamental levels. The problem solving and decision making of the client can be more successful by promoting regeneration and stress management, constructive thinking and emotion regulation, as well as self-management. Conversely, supporting the client in problem solving and decision-making can significantly reduce the client's strain.

Conclusion

Crises as a problem in coaching offer opportunities and challenges. On the one hand, the crisis situation can increase motivation to accept and seek help and guidance from others. Jungbauer and Wegge (2015) note, for example, that in times of crisis there is a higher acceptance of charismatic leadership. Thus, it can be assumed that the client is more receptive to the influence of a coach in a crisis situation.

On the other hand, crises lead to several problems of effective information processing described above, which can also impair the effectiveness of coaching. Coaching in crises should consider these particularities, for example, by first focusing on defusing the client's stress as long as they are in a very tense state. If necessary, coaches should refer clients to a psychotherapist (Möller, 2016).

To manage and prevent individual crises, it is important to consider the physiological-regenerative, the cognitive-emotional, and the behavioral-instrumental levels. A balance of problem-related and fundamental interventions can promote crisis management and its future prevention.

One of the first empirical studies examining coaching of clients in a crisis dealt with insolvent entrepreneurs. Schermuly et al. (2020) found a positive improvement in psychological well-being, vital exhaustion, and vigilance of insolvent entrepreneurs after coaching. Although the study's findings are preliminary and restricted by the lack of a control group and a rather small sample size, they contribute to the research on coaching effects. More research on effective coaching for clients being in a crisis situation is needed.

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Culturality in Coaching

Sunny Stout-Rostron

Introduction

Successful management of today's increasingly diverse workforce is one of the most important global challenges faced by political and corporate leaders. The move from homogeneous societies to heterogeneous cultures is an irreversible trend, and many of today's organizational challenges stem from the inability of leaders to fully comprehend the dynamics of diversity and culture. Their failure to dissociate themselves from their own biases and prejudices holds them back from giving free rein to the creativity and potential of a multicultural workforce. Hence the need for business coaches to understand the dynamics and history of cultural diversity management, in order to help leaders develop the necessary understanding and self-awareness to engage effectively with the complex issues involved.

This is not a new phenomenon. But in some respects, we have advanced since the first culturally diverse global city: Ancient Rome. In Rome, which at one point in ancient history had a population of over 1 million, most people came from somewhere else and became something different. This was the beginning of modernity, a melting pot where everyone was accepted if they behaved in a Roman way. Rome was different from the British Empire, for example where there was a repeated emphasis on "pride of race", and outsiders, on the whole, remained just that— outsiders. The Romans, in contrast, accepted outsiders, and even embraced them, irrespective of national origin or colour. And an outsider could even become emperor. Rome was thus the first culturally diverse, global city.

In the twenty-first century, there cannot be many places in the world that remain so culturally isolated or homogeneous that cultural diversity is not an issue. South Africa, where I currently live, in some ways offers a unique perspective

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from which to view the problems presented by diversity and the challenges it throws up for coaching. South Africa presents almost every possible diversity challenge. This can be extremely refreshing and stimulating as it exposes coaches to new ways of thinking and divergent ideas. Given the fraught political history of South Africa, however, diversity can also present tremendous potential for conflict within both society and workplace.

As business coaches working in a global marketplace, it is important to understand what we mean by the cultural and diversity issues that face us and our coachees. Sometimes, however, the problem is not isolated to one aspect of diversity, but can cover a spectrum. Even in organizations with fairly uniform ethnic or cultural homogeneity, there can be latent issues of gender, race, ethnicity, patriarchy, and language. This chapter explores the contemporary literature to see how it can guide us as coaches to help leaders manage and flourish in complex, culturally diverse organizations and societies.

Defining Diversity

To better understand the effects of diversity on cohesion and group performance, studies have attempted to classify the most common diversity attributes as being:

Readily detectable vs less observable
Surface level vs deep level
Highly job related vs less job related
Task related vs relations oriented
Role related vs inherent (Christian et al., 2006, p. 461)

Harrison et al. (1998) defined diversity along the dimensions of surface-level (demographic) and deep-level (attitudinal) diversity, based on the hypothesis that "as people interact to get to know one another, stereotypes are replaced by more accurate knowledge of each other as individuals" (Lee & Farh, 2004, p. 140). Diversity has also been examined within the context of identity- and organizationally-based group membership—the most commonly researched attributes being age, gender, race-ethnicity, functional background, educational background, and tenure (Christian et al., 2006, p. 460).

According to Jarzabkowski and Searle (2004, p. 405), diversity is important to the strategic capacity of the top team, enhancing its capacity to deal with dynamic and volatile environments and improve corporate performance. Diversity is, however, a complex matter which involves demographic, informational and behavioural differences that may be difficult to manage effectively.

Demographic diversity refers to obvious differences, such as gender, age, and race. "The longer a team is together the more members gain familiarity with each other and the less demographic measures indicate true diversity. Over time, differences of race, gender or age become familiar and cease to be remarkable" (Jarzabkowski & Searle, 2004, p. 400).

Informational diversity is related to the different functional, experiential, and educational backgrounds members bring to a team. Informational diversity is based on different functional, educational, and industrial experience backgrounds that constitute information and knowledge upon which the team draws. Diverse industry experience adds to the strategic capacity of the team by broadening the boundaries for envisioning strategic opportunities (Jarzabkowski & Searle, 2004, p. 402).

Behavioural diversity involves the different personality styles within a team (Jarzabkowski & Searle, 2004, p. 400). Personality is a more robust indicator of difference, and the personality composition of the team will strongly affect the way team members work together (Jarzabkowski & Searle, 2004, pp. 403–404) and manage team conflict. Important here is that "psychological measures can expose hidden diversity that might affect collective strategic action" (Jarzabkowski & Searle, 2004, p. 405).

Defining Culture

Culture may be defined as a collective programming of the mind that shows in the values, symbols, and rituals to which we hold fast (Hofstede, 2001). Values may be defined as people's aspirations of how things should be done, and beliefs as practices within the culture (Javidan & House, 2001). Understanding societal culture can be complex, because it includes two sets of elements at once: the first is the ongoing cultural practices that inform us about the current perceptions of specific cultures, and the second is the strongly held values that inform us about aspirations and direction in which cultures wish to develop (Barak, 2014, p. 176).

In recent decades significant changes have taken place in the way the world is organized, thought about, and represented—none more so than in the area of, and increasing sensitivity to, cultural diversity. Hofstede defines culture as "the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from another" (Hofstede, 1994, p. 5). Matsumoto defines culture as "the set of attitudes, values, beliefs, and behaviours shared by a group of people, but different for each individual, communicated from one generation to the next" (Matsumoto, 1996, p. 16). Spencer-Oatey suggests that "culture is a fuzzy set of basic assumptions and values, orientations to life, beliefs policies, procedures and behavioural conventions that are shared by a group of people, and that influence (but do not determine) each member's behaviour and his/her interpretations of the 'meaning' of other people's behaviour" (Spencer-Oatey, 2008, p. 3). Culture has also been defined as "a set of beliefs and values about what is desirable and undesirable in a community of people, and a set of formal or informal practices to support the values" (House et al., 2002, p. 292). Hofstede et al. (2010) call culture the "software of the mind", noting that the patterns of thinking, feeling, and acting embedded in a culture are like "mental programmes".

Hofstede's (1980) research examined culture using surveys of 88,000 IBM employees worldwide to classify 40 nations along four cultural dimensions (to which Hofstede added a fifth in 2001):

1. Power distance—The relationship with authority and social inequality
2. Individualism vs collectivism—The relationship between the individual and the group
3. Masculinity vs femininity—The tendency towards assertiveness in contrast to modesty
4. Avoidance of uncertainty—The control of aggression and expressions of emotions
5. Long-term vs short-term orientation (Hofstede, 1980; Egan & Bendick, 2008, p. 388; Barak, 2014, p. 176–177)

Managing Diversity

Due to a technologically more connected world, organizations are having to deal with increasing diversity and with multiculturalism, gender, and equality initiatives. Organizations are being asked to embrace diversity to improve performance at every level from the factory floor to the executive board level. The term "diversity management" originated in North America, but has slowly taken hold in other regions and countries of the world. Barak (2014, p. 218) suggests the following definition:

Diversity management refers to the voluntary organizational actions designed to create greater inclusion of employees from various backgrounds into the formal and informal organizational structures through deliberate policies and programmes.

According to Christian et al., the objective of diversity management is to "increase our understanding of the effects that workgroup diversity has on cohesion and performance" (Christian et al., 2006, p. 460). But while "there is general consensus among researchers as to what constitutes diversity management, there is little agreement on the effect that it has in the workplace" (Christian et al., 2006, p. 460).

Research over the past 20 years shows mixed results as to how diversity impacts the strategic capacity of a business. A broad conclusion is "mixed-composition workgroups can improve group performance by providing a wider range of perspectives and a broader skills base—but simultaneously it can be detrimental to group cohesion and performance because the diversity in personal backgrounds has the potential to exert a negative influence" (Christian et al., 2006, p. 460).

The two most common theoretical approaches in the diversity management literature are:

The information/decision-making perspective, which proposes differences within a group's composition should be positively related to group performance, through greater variability in skills, abilities, and perspectives.

The social categorization perspective, which suggests workgroup diversity can be detrimental to satisfaction and performance—as group members will use similarities and differences between themselves to construct significant characteristics for comparison (Christian et al., 2006, p. 462).

According to Hewlett et al. (2013), new research provides compelling evidence that diversity unlocks innovation and drives market growth. The researchers examined two kinds of diversity: inherent and acquired. Inherent diversity involves traits people are born with, such as gender, ethnicity, and sexual orientation. Acquired diversity involves traits people gain from experience. The researchers refer to companies whose leaders exhibit at least three inherent and three acquired diversity traits as having two-dimensional diversity. Their research found that companies with two-dimensional diversity out-innovate and out-perform others (Hewlett et al., 2013).

In two-dimensional firms, "outside-the-box" ideas are heard, and employees are 45% more likely to report a growth in market share over the previous year and 70% more likely to report that the firm captured a new market. Without diverse leadership, women staff members are 20% less likely than heterosexual white men to win endorsement for their ideas; people of colour are 24% less likely; and lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender people are 21% less likely. Further, a team with a member who shares a client's ethnicity is 152% more likely than another team to understand that client (Hewlett et al., 2013). The research indicates an important conclusion for business coaches—leaders need to be acquired diversity to establish a culture in which all employees feel free to contribute ideas.

Barak (2014) distinguishes between the "exclusion workplace" and the "inclusive workplace", highlighting the importance for organizations of moving towards a globally inclusive workplace. The exclusion workplace operates within a context that is ethnocentric and closely focused on specific financial and national interests. In contrast, the inclusive workplace sees value in collaborating across national borders, being pluralistic, and identifying global mutual interests. The inclusive workplace encourages and facilitates the inclusion of individual employees who are different from the mainstream at each of the four levels.

Leadership as a Function of Cultural Difference

Cross-cultural research suggests culture can influence leadership concepts. This is important for business coaches, because a better understanding of the interaction between leadership and culture can lead to more effective diversity management. One study tests the assumption that concepts of leadership differ as a function of cultural differences in Europe, and finds that leadership concepts vary by culture (Brodbeck et al., 2000).

Some previous research had found the major cultural divide lies between eastern and western Europe, where western European countries tended to score higher on work-related values of "equality" or "egalitarian commitment" in contrast to eastern

European countries, which tended to score higher on "hierarchy" or "conservatism". Similarly, while managers from Germanic countries were found to generally make more participative decisions, managers from central European countries (Poland and the Czech Republic) tended to make more autocratic decisions (Brodbeck et al., 2000, p. 5).

Other previous studies had found a major cultural distinction between south and north European countries. For example, "Anglo" countries (the United Kingdom and Ireland), Nordic countries, and West Germany tended to score high on the leadership dimension "Equality and utilitarian involvement", while south European and Near East (Greece, Turkey) countries tended to score high on the leadership dimension "Hierarchy and loyal involvement" (Brodbeck et al., 2000, p. 6).

The study by Brodbeck et al. (2000) yields a somewhat more complex picture. It analyses the results of a leadership survey conducted in 22 countries that were either members of or applicants to the European Union, located in Europe (e.g. Switzerland), or strongly associated with European history and geopolitical development (e.g. Russia, Georgia, and Turkey). The survey involved over 6000 mid-level managers rating 112 questionnaire items containing descriptions of leadership traits and behaviours (Brodbeck et al., 2000, p. 1).

Analysis of the survey results identifies two major European cultural regions, further divided into country clusters, as follows (Brodbeck et al., 2000, pp. 7, 11–13, 21–24):

North/West European Region
Anglo cluster (United Kingdom, Ireland)
Nordic cluster (Netherlands, Sweden, Finland, Denmark)
Germanic cluster (Germany—West, Switzerland, Austria, Germany—East)
Czech Republic
France
South/East European Region:
Latin cluster (Hungary, Italy, Spain, Portugal)
Central cluster (Poland, Slovenia)
Near East cluster (Greece, Turkey)
Russia
Georgia

The study finds, for example that leadership attributes of "Interpersonal Directness and Proximity" are more strongly associated with outstanding leadership in Nordic countries than in Near East and Central European countries and Russia and Georgia. Further, leadership attributes of "Autonomy" are more strongly associated with outstanding leadership in Germanic countries and the Czech Republic than in Latin European countries (Brodbeck et al., 2000, p. 24).

The study suggests knowledge about particular cultural variations in leadership prototypes can help local and expatriate managers more accurately anticipate potential problems in cross-cultural interactions within business (Brodbeck et al., 2000, p. 24). The researchers believe the ability to build conceptual bridges between

cultures will remain a key competence for cross-cultural leadership, not only in Europe but also worldwide (Brodbeck et al., 2000, p. 26).

Cultural Competence in Coaching

Rosinski (2003) advocates understanding different cultures as necessary for a coach to broaden their understanding and be better equipped to assist the client. He talks about professional or organizational culture versus national culture, and indicates various groupings of diversity such as geography and nationality (including region, religion, and ethnicity), discipline, profession, and education, organization (including industry, corporation, union, and function), social life (including family, friends, social class, and clubs), and gender and sexual orientation. He compiled a Cultural Orientations Framework of seven categories, and within each of these categories are several dimensions to create understanding between people who work together. These cultural orientations can help coaches understand the clients with whom they work, as well as the environment within which their clients operate:

1. A sense of power and responsibility round the question, "Do you control nature or does nature control you?"
2. Time-management approaches
3. Identity and purpose
4. Organizational arrangements
5. Territory
6. Communication patterns
7. Modes of thinking (Rosinski, 2003, p. 15)

Coaches need to understand what, when, how and how much culture matters in practical, interpersonal, and organizational situations. According to Egan and Bendick (2008, p. 387), the multiple characteristics and backgrounds that shape individual and organizational identities, perceptions, attitudes, and behaviour, strongly influence the success of business enterprises today. To manage intergroup conflict, we need to equip managers and leaders to understand "how cultural differences work" and "how to turn cultural competence into a competitive advantage" (Egan & Bendick, 2008, p. 387). Consequently, the following personal competences are important for managers: flexibility, resourcefulness, tolerance for ambiguity, vision, cultural self-awareness, cultural consciousness, and multicultural leadership (Egan & Bendick, 2008, p. 387).

Cultural competence is defined as a "set of congruent behaviours, attitudes, and policies that come together in a system, agency, or among professionals, enabling them to work effectively in cross-cultural situations" (Cross et al., 1989, pp. iv–v). It starts with managers' personal cultural intelligence, or ability to operate in a variety of situations over a career, whether they arise from cross-functional assignments within a company, diverse work teams, or foreign postings (Earley & Mosakowski, 2004, p. 2). This ability has at least four components:

Metacognitive intelligence: The ability to acquire cultural knowledge, recognize cultural assumptions, understand cultural norms, and perceive others' cultural preferences before and during interactions.

Cognitive intelligence: Knowledge of economic, legal, values, and social systems in different cultures and subcultures.

Motivational intelligence: The desire to learn about and function in situations involving cultural differences, based on intrinsic interest and confidence in one's ability to deal with them.

Behavioural intelligence: The ability to exhibit situationally appropriate verbal and nonverbal actions, including words, tone, gestures, and facial expressions, when interacting with people from different cultures (Ang et al., 2007, p. 6–7).

Thus, cultural intelligence is about using the head (cognitive), heart (motivation), and body (body language) to "tease out of a person's or group's behaviour those features that would be true of all people and all groups, those peculiar to this person or this group, and those that are neither universal nor idiosyncratic" (Earley & Mosakowski, 2004, p. 1; Egan & Bendick, 2008, p. 391).

We can also learn from education. Gay (2002) makes the case for improving the success of ethnically diverse students in the United States through culturally responsive teaching when working with African American, Asian American, Latino, and Native American students. Culturally responsive teaching is defined as using the cultural characteristics, experiences, and perspectives of ethnically diverse students, and operating under the assumption that academic achievement for ethnically diverse students will improve when they are taught through their own cultural and experiential filters (Gay, 2002, p. 106).

Gay (2002) discusses how culturally responsive teacher preparation programmes teach how the communication styles of different ethnic groups reflect cultural values and shape learning behaviours—including knowledge about the linguistic structures of various ethnic communication styles. The communicative styles of most ethnic groups of colour in the United States are more active, participatory, dialectic, and multi-model. Among African Americans this interactive communicative style is referred to as "call response", and among Native Hawaiians it is called "talk-story" (Gay, 2002, p. 111). Among European-American females, the somewhat similar practice of "talking along with the speaker" is to show involvement, support, and confirmation and is described as "rapport talk" (Tannen, 1990).

Many African, Asian, Latino, and Native Americans use a different approach to organizing and transmitting ideas: one is called topic-chaining communication and uses indirectness (such as innuendo, symbolism, and metaphor) to convey ideas; weaving many different threads or issues into a single story; and embedding talk with feelings of intensity, advocacy, evaluation, and aesthetics. There also is the tendency to make the discourse conversational and more like story telling (Gay, 2002, p. 112).

Coaching Across Cultures

According to Rosinski (2003), if coaching is largely about shifting and expanding people's perspectives in a way they can translate into daily actions, then working with individual belief systems and assumptions is vital. The role of the culturally aware coach is to explore and develop self-awareness around the client's deeply held assumptions and paradigms about others who are different from themselves. A combination of coaching and intercultural skills is essential not only for global leaders, but for the executive coaches who will be able to facilitate the development of each leader's potential, as they learn from the resources gained through cultural diversity.

Rosinski (2003) explains that by integrating the cultural dimension into his coaching style, he is able to unleash more human potential and achieve more meaningful objectives. As the client becomes more aware of cultural differences, the latter can be used constructively to provide for learning, growth, and more effective interpersonal communications and relationships. According to Rosinski (2003), bridging coaching and inter-culturalism leads to a more creative and global form of coaching.

Rosinski (2003, p. 4) maintains that intercultural coaching is about being able to adopt a coaching style enhanced with a global and intercultural perspective. For tools, Rosinski (2003, p. 5) describes how to work with the Cultural Orientations Framework, the Global Coaching Process, and the Global Scorecard in Coaching Across Cultures.

Coaches are typically trained to reinforce the leader's individualistic orientation rather than taking cognizance of the collectivism of other cultures. In contrast, cross-cultural coaching means embracing both the individual and the collective mindset of the team or group. Today, we need to develop a new type of leader, one who is able to bring about the changes necessary to lead by integrating multiple cultural perspectives and creating an inclusive workplace—this is the role of the coach.

In an interview with Prajňa Paramita, Director of Interlogos Coaching based in Brussels, New York, and Bangalore, I explored her motivation and experience in coaching across cultures. Paramita enjoyed a multicultural upbringing in India, and professionally chose to be a career diplomat, eventually working with diplomats to help them communicate better within European institutions. After 6 years of training as a psychotherapist, she trained as an executive coach. Currently, she coaches managers in the corporate world in 28 European Union member states.

"My motivation in working across cultures stems from being born in a multicultural society. Although India is perceived as a single entity (and indeed, politically it is a nation state), it is home to a huge diversity of cultures. There are 22 languages in India, each with its own rich literary heritage, some dating back thousands of years. And for many of us, like myself, English is our first language. Then there are the religions. All the world's major religions are lived and practised on the Indian subcontinent. I know of no other way of being, than living and working across cultures" (Paramita, 2015, "personal communication", 24–25 September).

Paramita explains in any coaching interaction there is the challenge of observing and making sense of the unique mix each client brings into the coaching session—personality, family and upbringing, education, and organizational experience. It is important to be able to discern the interplay of these in their attitudes, behaviours, and worldview.

I asked Paramita what she thought were the core competencies coaches and leaders need to handle the complexity of diversity in today's world:

"Some of the core competencies that coaches and leaders require are curiosity, a motivation to learn about other cultures from a non-judgemental stance, an avoidance of stereotypes, or at least an awareness when they are lapsing into oversimplification. We speak increasingly of 'Cultural Intelligence', described by David Livermore as the capability to function across a variety of cultural contexts. In this concept of cultural contexts he also includes generational and organizational contexts. We can certainly add CQ to the existing list of IQ, EQ, SQ. One can hardly imagine being effective in today's globalized world without it" (Paramita, 2015, "personal communication", 24–25 September).

Her advice to coaches when working with diversity in organizations in both developed and emerging markets is to "take a genuine interest in other cultures. Taking time to develop a cross-cultural mindset is a must for those who wish to work globally" (Paramita, 2015, "personal communication", 24–25 September).

Conclusion

Due to a technologically more connected world, organizations are having to deal with increasing diversity and complex multicultural, gender, and equality initiatives. As a result, a full understanding of diversity and an adaptable multicultural competence is critical for global leaders, and these skills must begin with coaches in order for them to integrate the cultural dimension into their coaching approach.

Hofstede, in his comprehensive global research (1994), defines culture as the "collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from another" (Hofstede, 1994, p. 5), and classifies 40 nations along five cultural dimensions. This highlights the need for leaders to develop an understanding of the "collective programming" of other cultures—not just reinforcing their own cultural orientation.

A key role of the business coach is to help shift and expand the client's perspectives, and to enable them to develop an awareness of the limiting assumptions and paradigms they hold about others who are different from themselves. This supports the need not just to understand client issues, but to develop a knowledge of the cultures within which the client lives and works. To be able to do this, coach practitioners need to question their own views of the world, and develop an acute awareness of the complex processes—social, cultural, economic, and personal—that makeup who and what they are.

Barak ([2014](#)) highlights the importance for organisations to move towards more inclusive workplaces, seeing the value in collaborating across regional, national, and global interests. Studies also show clearly that leadership concepts vary according to culture. This is another reason for coaches to be acutely aware of the cultural paradigms that may both overtly and subconsciously influence themselves and their clients.

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Decision-Making as a Focus in Business Coaching

Cornelia Strobel, Dirk Bayas-Linke, and Othmar Sutrich

Introduction

To avoid misunderstanding, the central terms "risk" and "decision-making" are briefly described in the sense they are used in this chapter.

What is "risk"? The different risk assessments are the linchpin of decision-making. Risks have a Janus face. On one hand, they contain opportunities and dangers. On the other hand, they involve risks in the issue and in the process. Even though we know that in today's language risk is often equated with danger, we consciously use the term risk in the sense described above. Because if a thing were only dangerous, we would not deal with it, but simply leave it alone.

What is meant by "decision"? A decision is only one phase of the decision-making process. The decision-making process consists of several phases and the implementation is an essential part of the decision.

This nuanced description of these terms is of central importance for understanding this chapter. But let us now start with practice.

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Practical Example: Everyday Life Is Surprising

In a large international company with more than 1000 employees, a male manager, in his early 40s, moved from product development, where he had a group leader role, to the new and unfamiliar area of sales as a department manager. In addition to sales, he was also responsible for marketing and PR. Mr. Martin had been in the new position for some time, but he felt insecure since the beginning, which the employees also felt. He asked himself the question whether he was up to the new tasks, how he could better deal with his uncertainty and how he could quickly develop into these new tasks, because his employees and especially other department heads were watching him very closely. The company from the IT sector had developed well in recent years and had asserted itself in an increasingly competitive environment—both nationally and internationally. The targets were ambitious and arguably not feasible. But the company had to continue to develop, achieve greater sales and perhaps also modify its business model. But from Mr. Martin's point of view, these were future aspirations he could not decide. In this situation, he sought a coach who had expertise in the industry and suited him because he needed to get results quickly.

In the initial meeting, the coach and Mr. Martin explored the expectations from the different perspectives; Mr. Martin, his team, and the organization. It was agreed that through the coaching process the focus would be on the upcoming, overdue or unmade decisions. The search direction was based on the integration of the client's interaction framework, designed by the client. In this, detailed consideration was given to the fact that coordination and integration of all decisions were necessary. In this context, the detection and balancing of risk assessments in the issue and the process were of fundamental importance. From this, the respective (hypothetical) impacts on the client, his team, and the organization could be taken into account and suitable intervention options identified. The aim was to increase opportunities and minimize dangers.

Decision-Making in Organizations

Theoretical Background

Organizations consist of decisions. The communication of decisions is the basic operation by which the organization creates and maintains itself. In this respect, decisions in organizations first create the organization in which decisions are made. They continuously supply themselves with information by connecting decision to decision. These have an information value because they are new and would otherwise not be decisions (Luhmann, 2011 pp. 65–72). Based on this understanding, the basic figure of the decision coaching described here becomes clear using the Pentaeder Model (Fig. 1).

Fig. 1 Pentaeder® Model
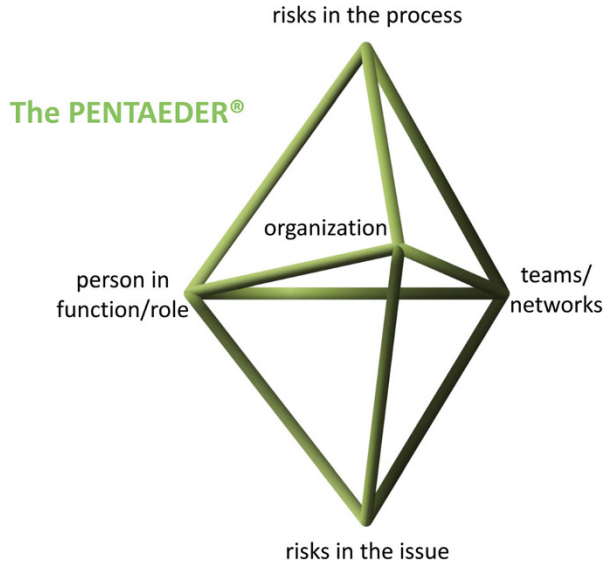
The three system levels: person in function and role, team or network, and organization interact with each other (Opp & Sutrich, 2007). The linchpin is the different risk assessments of the people involved from these three perspectives. It is important for all of them to take into account both the risks in the issue and those in the decision-making process (double risk). This risk axis is the backbone of the Pentaeder. Normally, the preoccupation with the risks in the issue, which are always and often intensively discussed, is predominant. However, successes stand and fall with a balanced combination of "what" and "how" risks. This is achieved by integrating the relevant different risk perspectives and by monitoring them throughout the entire process.

The Pentaeder Model itself and coaching using this basic figure are helpful for those who are looking for a simple orientation in the complexity of decision-making in organizations who want to understand and design it responsibly. With its five corner points, the model shows the indispensable key aspects of decision-making in organizations that should be professionally examined. In the connecting lines, the correlations and effects are shown, the knowledge of which enhances a substantial organizational ability to judge and allows an optimized designing of decision-making.

Transfer into Coaching Practice

This perspective summarized in the model, focuses and orients the coach in their work with the client. It ensures that the relevant perspectives and observation points of the system levels, as well as the double risk with its opportunities and dangers, are

consciously reflected. It is perfectly legitimate to put the client in the foreground in order to shed light on his "what" and "how" risks and to work on them. It is important that both the coach and the client are aware that team and organizational perspectives resonate in the background. Frequently, putting the conscious change of the team or organizational perspective in the foreground and that of the person in function and role in the background brings a clear gain in knowledge and an expanded view of the meaningful next steps of action and knowledge.

The method of foreground and background consideration serves the coach as a means to reduce or increase complexity in the consulting system. Whenever behavioral patterns need to be explored, the first step is to reduce complexity. The aim of this approach is to sharpen the client's perspective, to produce differences, to expand the space for options, and thus to gradually integrate context-related complexity. It is a guided discovery from the respective locations. This is helpful because, in addition to the three system levels, the risks can also be very different from the respective locations. The flexible use of foreground and background allows the coach and client to let the consulting system breathe—reducing or increasing complexity as required.

Decision-Making Behavior of People in Function and Role

Research Findings

Decision-making behavior starts with the individual and subjective perspectives of the decision-making. It is highly dependent on subjective perceptions, memory, experiences, and the individual's handling of uncertainty. In the course of this research, many theoretical approaches and findings have been developed that reveal specific automatisms and distortions (Kahneman, 2012). In complex and non-transparent decision-making situations, we rely on or even have to rely on our intuition, using mental heuristics, which can then also lead to perceptual illusions. This results in different decision-making behavior. A large amount of research has provided evidence that people are subject to a whole range of perceptual distortions in their thinking, which then—as measured by their interests—lead to incorrect and bad decisions. Based on their research, Kahneman et al. (2011) have developed a checklist of 12 questions that should help to reduce these distortions of perception and lead to better decision-making behavior. Applied regularly they can be used to monitor the success and improve the quality of team decisions.

We make about 20,000 decisions every day (Pöppel, 2008) and many of these decisions are in the course of our everyday work. Some decisions are made implicitly and quickly (autopilot) and some consciously and more slowly (pilot) (Kahneman, 2012). The majority of decisions in organizations are routine decisions to keep the organization running. The approach pursued here in theory and practice refers to pattern recognition in subjective uncertainty and focuses on routine decision-making.

Tools

The use of the Kairos decision maker profile (Fig. 2) (Lanzenberger & Sutrich, 2008) has proven to be particularly useful for the exploration and evaluation of the personal (in)security perspective. It is derived from Fritz Riemann's Basic Forms of Fear (1979) and was adapted for decision-making. Thus, the view is focused on one's own actions and is carried out in a joint exploratory process of self-reflection and reflection by others. Kairos describes typical characteristics, patterns, and differences in professional decision-making behavior, especially in the context: where and how do I gain confidence in dealing with uncertain situations, i.e., decision-making situations.

The focus is on the eight individual decision preferences: Energetic, Pragmatic, Solicitous, Flexible, Intuitive, Communicative, Autonomous and Balanced, as well as their interaction in the decision-making process. In particular, this interaction conduces to self-reflection and the new discovery of individual behavioral patterns in dealing with one's own uncertainty when making decisions. In the context of coaching, this always takes place with the clear job reference of the client, or in other words: the organizational context is included.

Transfer into Coaching Practice

The question in the context of the coaching is now, which decision routines our client has developed in order to remain capable of acting on the behavioral level with
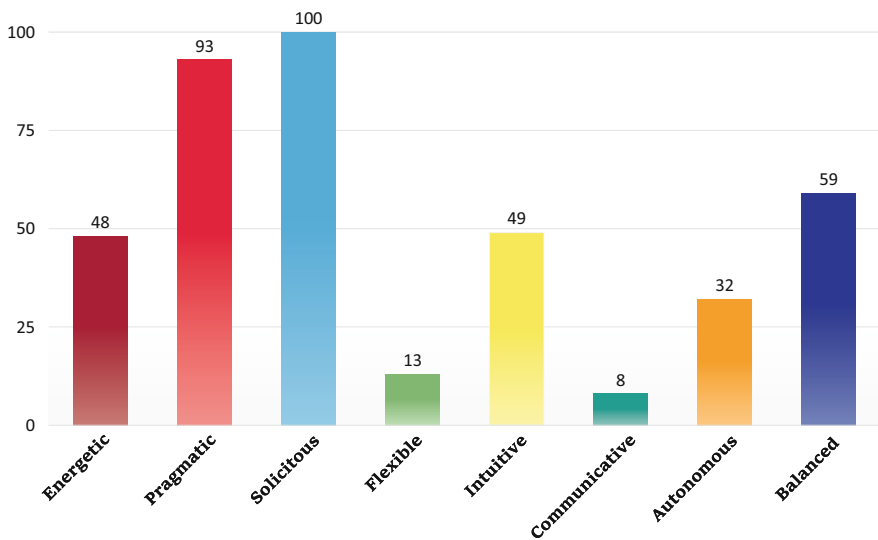
Fig. 2 Kairos® profile

his/her uncertainty in the decision process. Uncertainty is always an indication there is something to decide, but not yet what, who, how, and when. This is exactly what coaching is all about.

Good search directions are: what function does the client have, with the help of which role identities do they try to cope with this function, what is the security pattern behind it? Conscious exploratory questions are here: how can leadership be identified in the individual profile? Which preferences are in the foreground? How strong is the individual's own awareness of these individual preferences? We distinguish between two fundamentally different modes of decision-making: the autopilot of routine decision-making and the pilot, responsible for conscious and mindful decision-making (including Kahneman, 2012). A useful and proven approach in coaching is to jointly examine what distinguishes one mode from the other and when and for what purpose the respective mode is useful and should be applied. This focusing brings clarity about one's own understanding of leadership and the associated opportunities for change at both the personal and the organizational levels.

In the case of our practical example, the client was able to follow very well the hypothesis that their automatic need for security was characterized in particular by proven procedures and clear facts and figures (pragmatic, solicitous; see Fig. 2). Their preferred approach of making special use of these two dimensions is now not target oriented, but rather obstructive. Due to the well-developed intuitive and balanced dimensions, they feel the expectations of their environment (employee and supervisor) and are also aware of the potential danger if they do not actively (energetically) break new ground. Especially the low flexible and communicative dimensions show them the way to use this dimension with others. In this situation, they take on a clearly positive meaning. Now the employees and colleagues, who support them with new, creative approaches, are highly welcome. Also, the common penetration and creation of meaning in his team, brought in by his colleagues, now delivers a value for all. Due to the good options to check for rapid feasibility, appropriate data foundation, and impact on sales success, a useful and fruitful cooperation suddenly emerges for all. The different risk assessments, brought in via the various security and uncertainty perspectives, pay off for the entire team.

In the case of our client, Mr. Martin, it made sense to link his perspective with the hypothetical (in)security perspectives of superiors, colleagues, and employees. This extends the framework to the team, which is now the central place of decision-making. The changed perspective on team competencies, interaction dynamics, and their elementary benefit for accomplishing the task changes the client's view of the team and thus creates new usable resources. This is all the more remarkable because at the beginning of the process the client attributed little attention and solution relevance to the team and its network (Sutrich et al., 2011).

In the course of our coaching practice, we have found it is particularly useful to consider together with the client whether they prefer to focus on the opportunities that arise, or on the potential dangers, respectively, on the tried and tested. If these two perspectives meet, this can often lead to a reflex rejection of the other approach. The option seeker refuses to look at the danger or preservation side and vice versa.

Recognizing the potential in the mutual complementarity for the joint decision-making process and learning to handle it with care usually leads to a significant improvement in the decision-making process. The balancing of risks becomes multi-perspective and more mature. The individual phases of the decision-making process are dealt with in a more balanced and mindful way and it is possible to look at this with considerably more pleasure respectively less frictional losses.

Designing Decision-Making Processes as a Topic in Individual Coaching

Research Findings

"An undistorted process of decision-making certainly reveals weak analyses. But the reverse is not true. For an excellent analysis is useless if it is not given a fair hearing in the decision-making process" (Lovallo & Sibony, 2010). Studies show that effectively deciding companies generate a 6% higher EBIT (Blenko et al., 2010).

In the direct interaction of people, numerous phenomena of information processing and decision-making occur that cannot be explained by the behavior of individual members of the organization (Frey et al., 1996). Organizational psychology approaches consider not only phenomena which appear rational, but also bureaucratic, adaptive-heuristic, political-conflicting, and chaotic-random ones (Scholl, 2004). The process of decision-making is not described as a simple sequence of decisions of individual persons. It is about situational constellations, about the emergence of ultimately binding decisions and their implementation. An important aspect here is the risk willingness of companies (Garud & Shapira, 1997).

Tools

The (ultimately binding) decision is only a small part of the decision-making process. In everyday understanding, but also in research, the focus is often placed on this aspect of the decision. It is important to recognize that the more dynamic, less clear, more uncertain, and risky the problem and decision situations become, the more important it is to devote attention and professionalism to the design of the decision-making process. This must first be worked out. Because there is no certainty of results here. Professionally and transparently designed processes produce new, situational certainty.

The importance of the decision-making process therefore cannot be overestimated in coaching. Because working with the process of decision-making connects the two perspectives, what is there to decide? With how do we do it?—and
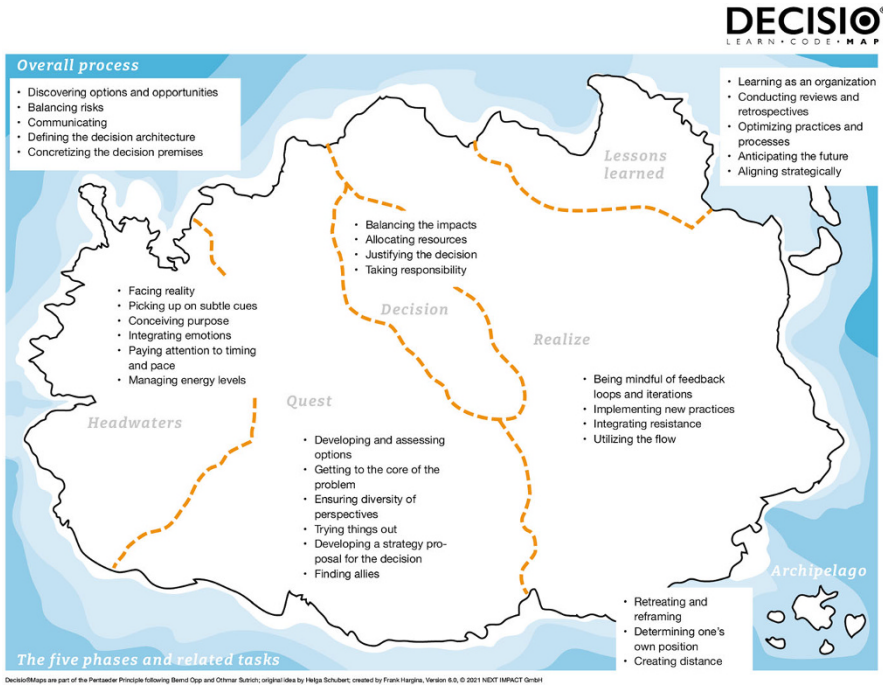
Fig. 3 Decisio® map

puts in a nutshell how effective and efficient the contribution to the respective business process is.

So what does the decision-making process mean? Decision-making processes can be divided into different phases that are not necessarily linear in time (Fig. 3). If you zoom out of this situation "resolution," you will discover other important processes before and after it. In this way, the coach offers a differentiated and variance-expanding view of the decision, in which considerable potential for discovery and learning can be raised for the client. He also comes a step closer to the everyday reality in organizations and thus presumably also to the effectiveness of the client.

We would like to emphasize two particularly useful aspects here. Firstly, it is relevant to realize that without implementation consistency the decision is merely a declaration of intent. Secondly, it quickly becomes clear there are different tasks and roles in the decision-making process depending on the phase of the process in which the client is involved. Here the Rapid Role Model (Rogers & Blenko, 2006) proves to be just as useful as the focus roles according to the Decisio Process Map (Sutrich & Opp, 2016, pp. 148–151). In this extended understanding of decision-making, there is an enormous potential for the client to gain knowledge and quality. Recognizing that in their function, for example, in strategic decisions, they are more likely to be responsible in the preparation or implementation phase, while in operational decision-making they may well have to take responsibility for the decision, offers the client a different perspective on both their own creative options and on different types of responsibilities.

This perspective and the process orientation also allow a more differentiated view of the scope and timing of the team: in which phases would which involvement of the team be effective and helpful? The team as a system of interaction has a special value when making decisions. It combines the sense-making concepts of the individual with those of the organization (Sutrich & Opp, 2016, p. 154). This means when individual coaching is about making decisions in the working world, we always have to deal not only with the individual but also with interaction and organizational systems that have a considerable influence on the decision-making culture and results (What is allowed and what not? How do we do it?).

Transfer into Coaching Practice

The application of the Decisio Process Map can be used for explorations under the heading "From Decision to Decision-Making." The perspectives and thus the complexity are initially increased by using the Decisio Process Map. Especially in complex, volatile, and diffuse decision situations, the client can take and explore different roles and associated risk perspectives professionally guided (also physically) by a coach to the different observation sites on the Decisio continent. From there, hypotheses can be generated which are hidden with regard to the risks in each role and perspective and their interaction. With the help of this visualization and the associated experience, the focus and prioritization in individual coaching can be set in a well-founded and conscious manner.

With regard to the client, working on decision-making processes it could be gradually crystallized that the dreams of the future (decisions on business models) were already in full swing and the different actors in different phases of the process were working on this question implicitly or explicitly. Our client concluded from this that they themselves were in the land of seeking, but did not consciously communicate his perspectives, ideas, and necessities and thus took his own options of influencing. In addition, it became clear they would have to bring in their observations and ideas to top management before reaching the narrow ridge of decision-making. From their perspective, top management was already close to making the decision, and they would then be responsible for its implementation. They decided to discuss this with their superior. What surprised them was the feedback that the top management agreed in principle that the course for the future had to be set now, but concerning the how and what, the top management was still in the land of seeking, also being expected to contribute views and ideas.

Decision-Making and Organization: What Role Does the Individual Play?

Research Findings

Meanwhile there are countless examples that the effectiveness of strategic decisions, in particular, is seriously diminished when people succumb to prejudice and distorted perceptions, especially under pressure. Unfortunately, there is little that a person concerned can do about it when the autopilot is active (Ariely, 2008; Kahneman, 2012). In particular, typical heuristics, such as positive illusions with a tendency to overestimate oneself, false security with the unquestioned trust in one's own knowledge, and backward errors that lead us to correct false assessments in our memory, trip us up. All decision routines in companies that are cultivated and positively perceived lead to strong neural connections in the brain, which can subsequently only be changed with a great deal of effort and awareness (Ariely, 2008; Kahneman, 2012). They are culture-forming and cause the least cognitive effort. Our patterns in thinking and behavior change when we realize that the previous behavior is no longer appropriate and that a change will bring us advantages. In particular, the Rubicon model (Heckhausen et al., 1987) and its further development (Storch, 2011) are established methods for processing. This model, which focuses on the individual, reaches its limits in organizational decision-making processes. In our view, a disciplined process of organizational decision-making, not individual genius, provides a powerful key to a solid strategy for dealing with the decision-making routines of the organization and the individual.

Transfer into Coaching Practice

Addressing the causal relationship between individual heuristics and organizational routines in coaching is a characteristic feature of coaches who succeed in making visible both the perspective of the decision-making culture of organizations and the adaptation of the individual to the resulting reward and punishment mechanisms in coaching and in using this for interventions. Abandoning organizational perspective, would fade out the context in which the individual behavior is to become effective and thus disregard the causal relationships.

The insights gained from working on the decision-making process and the behavioral changes in the position that is necessary from the client's point of view lead to the organizational culture. How can our client influence this in order to bring his perspectives into the organization and to top management as effectively as possible? To do this, it is necessary to analyze and reflect on the decision-making culture for important decisions. What similarities and differences can be derived from the situations? One important finding was: The closer the top management was mentally to the decision, the less it was possible to bring in other perspectives and

find an open ear for them. However, it was possible to work out together with whom our client would have to talk to, how he could spread his ideas in order to increase the probability of being heard.

For the professional design of exploration spaces, the conscious linking of the Kairos decision maker profile with preferences for one or the other phase of the decision-making process is a good idea. This helps to identify what needs to be focused on or what is often forgotten. The Decisio Process Map becomes a container for mindfulness and completeness for both the coach and the client. Ideally, the client can use the process map after the coaching as their compass for decision-making processes in their team and organization.

Conclusion

Deciding on the understanding represented here is the most important basic operation in organizations. This is the foundation for the legitimacy of placing decision-making at the center of business coaching. As we have explained, decision-making is a complex business—for our clients as well as for us coaches. For us coaches, the Pentaeder Model offers a helpful orientation to keep the various options and focuses professionally in view and in space, supported by the tools and instruments explicitly developed for this purpose. Decision coaching combines a guided discovery in the sense of a deeper reflection with a concretization on the level of action and increases the ability to judge and the power of judgement of people, teams, and organizations. In this respect, decision coaching differs clearly from the older and more widespread forms of coaching for personal development. To think decision-making further and broader and to expand one's own mental models offers completely new and diverse interventions. This brings it quite close to the experienced everyday world of the client.

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E-Coaching: An Overview

Harald Geißler

Introduction

E-coaching refers to coaching sessions in which electronic communication media are used (Armutat et al., 2015; Geißler & Kanatouri, 2015; Kanatouri & Geißler, 2016) and is thus the counterpart to coaching sessions that are conducted with non-electronic media, i.e. which are conducted as face-to-face sessions, using pen, paper or flipcharts etc.

The term 'e-coaching', which was introduced into the coaching literature in 2008 with the publication of an anthology (Geißler, 2008), in which for the first time a systematic overview of the use of electronic media in coaching was given, has not yet been able to gain general acceptance. Coaching using electronic media is sometimes referred to as virtual coaching, online coaching, distance coaching, digital coaching, Internet coaching or remote coaching.

Before starting to give an overview of coaching using electronic media in this chapter, three preliminary remarks are necessary. The first refers to the understanding of media on which this chapter is based, which, without mentioning its complex background in the history of ideas (Rusch et al., 2007, pp. 31–34), is limited to communication technology aspects alone and takes up the suggestions of Faßler (1997) and Pross (1972) to focus on the question of whether technical devices are necessary for the creation or reception of media content. If these are electronic devices that are used in any way for coaching, the term e-coaching will be used.

Our second comment relates to the Internet. The question arises whether it makes sense to describe the Internet as a medium or whether it would not be more appropriate to perceive it as an infrastructure that can be designed in multiple ways (Döring, 2003, pp. 42–44) or even as an environment for social interaction (Weidenmann, 2003, p. 463). The Internet offers many different services, and its

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effectiveness is determined not only by the technology but also by cultural and socio-psychological conditions. One cannot, therefore, speak of 'the' Internet. And that is why it is also not possible to simply transfer scientific knowledge gained with regard to one specific Internet use or environment to another—such as Internet-based coaching. For this reason, extreme caution should be exercised when reflecting on e-coaching to rely on media theories that have been developed with reference to other Internet environments, e.g. the theory of rational media choice, which refers to the aspect of social presence (e.g. Short & Christie, 1976), media richness (Daft & Lengel, 1986) or the feedback possibilities offered (Clark & Brennan, 1991).

This problem leads to the third remark. It contains the hint that media theories cannot be developed in a content-neutral way but must take into account the specifics of their intended use in a differentiated way (Geißler, 2016c, 2017b). As will be shown in this chapter, this means a media theory of e-coaching must take the specifics of coaching sufficiently into account and must therefore be developed within the framework of a media theory of coaching. This is because e-coaching is a special form of coaching, characterised by a specific choice of media.

Outlines of a Media Theory of Coaching

The insight that e-coaching is to be reflected in the context of a media theory of coaching is confronted with the fact that such a theory does not yet exist, not even in rudimentary approaches. To tackle this deficit is a demand that is beyond the scope of this chapter, but we can begin the journey of engaging with this question. We will attempt to outline three basic features of such a theory, although we note such steps are tentative and as research develops may need to be amended.

The first of the features just mentioned is that traditional and modern coaching media can perform two different functions. On the one hand, they can serve technology-supported communication and be used as a communication or basic media (Armutat et al., 2015; Geißler & Kanatouri, 2015). In detail, this means face-to-face communication between coach and client with the help of synchronous electronic communication media (i.e. video, audio and text chat communication as well as avatar-based communication as in Second Life) becomes location-independent and asynchronous video, audio or text messages additionally make coaching time-independent.

If, on the other hand, electronic media are used for human–computer interaction, they function as problem-solving media or tools that can guide self-coaching or structure the coach–client dialogue and thus make it more effective (Armutat et al., 2015; Geißler & Kanatouri, 2015).

The second feature of the media theory of coaching to be outlined here directs the attention to the different senses involved in coaching processes, namely three- and two-dimensional vision, hearing, haptic touch and sensory feeling, especially of objects and—even if only marginally—also of the smell of, e.g. plasticine, with which the client shapes something. As shown in Fig. 1, two questions arise with

Fig. 1 The individual components of the coaching basis media and coaching problem-solving media

			Basic media						Problem-solving media											
Reception of sensory data	Generation of sensory data	Mediation of sensory data	linguistic behavior	para-linguistic behavior	eye-contact	non-verbal body expressions	external personal appearance	coaching context	Voice	Texts given	Texts configurable	Drawing Symbols given	Drawing Symbols configurable	Objects & plants given	Objects & plants configurable	Humans & animals given	statically configurable	dynamically configurable	Problem-solving context given	configurable
3D visual Phenomena	NEL	NEL	SYN																		
	NEL	NEL	ASY																		
	NEL	NEL	SYN																		
	NEL	EL	ASY																		
	NEL	EL	SYN																		
	EL	EL	ASY																		
2D visual Phenomena	NEL	NEL	SYN																		
	NEL	NEL	ASY																		
	NEL	EL	SYN																		
	NEL	EL	ASY																		
	EL	EL	SYN																		
	EL	EL	ASY																		
auditive Phenomena	NEL	NEL	SYN																		
	NEL	NEL	ASY																		
	NEL	EL	SYN																		
	NEL	EL	ASY																		
	EL	EL	SYN																		
	EL	EL	ASY																		
hapt./sens. Phen	NEL	NEL	SYN																		
	NEL	NEL	ASY																		
olfactor. Phen	NEL	NEL	SYN																		
	NEL	NEL	ASY																		

regard to these sensory data. Firstly, the question already mentioned above as to whether electronic aids are involved in the generation or reception of these sensory data, and secondly whether the data transmission is synchronous (Döring, 2003, pp. 80–111) or asynchronous (Döring, 2003, pp. 49–80).

The third characteristic of the media theory of coaching to be outlined here reflects the necessity of taking into account the special features of electronically mediated coaching communication by asking about the media's fundamental components.

In this sense, the following coaching components can be identified for the basic coaching media (see chapter 'Means of Verbal and Non-verbal Communication in Coaching'):

- Linguistic behaviour: Choice of words and sentence composition.
- Paralinguistic behaviour: Speaking rate, volume, sound formation, articulation, accentuation, speech dynamics, pauses and delays and sounds such as 'mmhh' and 'Oohh', but also laughter, moans and the like.
- Line of sight or contact: The client's gaze and where they are looking.
- Non-verbal body expressions: Facial expression, posture, movements and the positioning of the body in space as well as body contact.

- External appearance of the interaction partners: Gender, age, facial features, ethnic characteristics, height and size, outfit such as clothing, jewellery and perfume and haircut or hairstyle.
- Coaching context: The client's or coach's premises, location or surroundings.

Traditional Communication Media in Coaching

Face-to-Face Coaching

E-coaching is distinguished above all from face-to-face coaching. For this reason, it is necessary to take a brief look at this coaching format here, and how it appeals to all the senses in the here and now without technical aids. This offers specific advantages and disadvantages. The latter includes the impact on travel time and costs and complexity of meeting.

Just as for video and telephone coaching, the most important media components for face-to-face coaching are the auditory-linguistic and paralinguistic communication phenomena, which are generated naturally and conveyed synchronously without electronic aids. For they are not only of central importance for the content of the coaching topic, but also for the metacommunicative control of the coaching process (Geißler, 2017a).

In addition to these media components, there are also those of the direction of gaze or eye contact, non-verbal body expressions, external appearance and the coaching context, which are generated naturally and are also synchronously communicated synchronously in 3D visual form.

Of particular importance is the direction of gaze or eye contact (Chen et al., 2013). Because they reflect the emotionality of the coaching topic and situation. Looking into the eyes of the client, therefore, provides the coach with diagnostic information. In addition, it enables process-related, consistent feedback (Duncan, 1973) and—usually unconsciously—causes individual attention retention, social commitment and mutual control (Argyle, 1972, pp. 104–108).

It is quite similar with the non-verbal body expressions of the outer personal appearance. On the one hand, they can also provide the coach with valuable diagnostic insights into the client's problems, but on the other hand they can also attract a lot of attention. If one follows the media theory of channel reduction (Döring, 2003, pp. 149–154) and the filtering out of social cues (Döring, 2003, pp. 154–157), it is obvious these perception data can easily become a source of transmissions and projections for the client.

Letter-Based Coaching

The second traditional coaching medium to be mentioned here for the sake of completeness—although it is now only used extremely rarely—is letter communication (Arnold, 2008). It is based on 2D visual writing, which is asynchronously generated and communicated non-electronically and is thus shares similarities with e-mail communication.

Electronic Synchronous Communication Media in Coaching

The most obvious advantage that distinguishes the electronic synchronous communication media of telephone, video and text chat communication from face-to-face communication is the independence of location, which makes it possible to save travel time and costs and—as a coach or client—to be available anywhere in the world.

Telephone Coaching

Until 2015, the undisputed number one electronic communication media used in coaching and the most scientifically researched coaching medium was the telephone (Berry, 2005; Charbonneau, 2002; Frazee, 2008; Ghods, 2009; McLaughlin, 2013). Phones are widespread, technically reliable and offer the opportunity to speak, despite physical distance.

The limitation to the acoustic communication channel, which is characteristic of telephone coaching, is widely perceived as its greatest deficit. This deficit can be partially compensated. Because with a professionally trained ear, the coach can use the paralinguistic communication behaviour of the client diagnostically. And through paralinguistically resonant behaviour the coach can effectively guide the client, similar to a musician who on the one hand 'tunes in' to the musical behaviour of his fellow players and on the other hand 'sets the tone'.

If one follows the media theories of channel reduction and the filtering out of social cues (Döring, 2003, pp. 149–157) in connection with media theory of social information processing (Döring, 2003, pp. 161–166), it becomes apparent that the omission of visual data of non-verbal body expression and external appearance also has the advantage that the client can concentrate more intensively on their coaching topic (McLaughlin, 2013).

Another advantage is that telephone coaching can be ideally enriched by electronic visual problem-solving tools due to the fact the visual communication channel is not occupied.

Video Coaching

Although video communication has a higher 'media richness' (Daft & Lengel, 1986; Dennis & Kinney, 1998) than telephone communication because the visual communication channel is added to the auditory one, video technology has so far been used less than the telephone for coaching due to the increased technical requirements and susceptibility to interference.

With reference to Fig. 1, it becomes clear video coaching has many similarities with face-to-face coaching and telephone coaching. But there are also differences. These include not only the 2D visuality, but also the restriction of eye contact. Because the recording camera is not identical to the eye of the viewer. Mutual eye contact is therefore not possible. A further difference is that the recording camera only selectively captures the coaching context as the coach and client are acting in different rooms.

Due to these features, video coaching can be combined with naturally generated problem-solving media, but much less well with visual electronic tools.

Text Chat Coaching

Finally, text chat also belongs to the synchronous communication media that can be used for coaching (Döring, 2003, pp. 82–94; Winkler, 2017). It consists of electronically generated 2D visual written communications that are synchronously conveyed with electronic aids and can be enriched by emoticons, i.e. 2D visual communication phenomena that express non-verbal body expressions in a stylised way.

In coaching practice, text chat coaching is chosen less frequently because writing under time rarely suits most clients' preferred communication style.

It is also difficult to overcome this resistance even if clients are reminded of the advantages such as the lack of visual communication data, as noted for telephone coaching.

Electronic-Asynchronous Communication Media in Coaching

The great advantage of asynchronous communication media is that they make coaching not only independent of location, but also independent of time. In this way, it is possible to communicate without any problems even across large time zone differences, and in principle any amount of time is available for the creation and reception of a communication message.

E-mail and SMS Coaching

Communicating by e-mail or SMS is a relatively common coaching practice (Clutterbuck, 2010; Koch, 2012; Poepsel, 2011; Ribbers & Waringa, 2015), mainly due to its technical practicability and broad popularity, but has been overtaken by the growth of visual synchronous communication platforms.

It consists of electronically generated 2D-visual written communication phenomena, which are conveyed electronically asynchronously and can be enriched by so-called emoticons, i.e. stylised non-verbal body expressions.

Quite obviously, the complete lack of visual and paralinguistic communication data for e-mail and SMS coaching is a deficit. This is because there is a lack of important—in connection with face-to-face coaching and partly also telephone coaching mentioned—diagnostic sources and possibilities for controlling the communication process.

Similar to telephone and voicemail coaching, however, these disadvantages can be partially compensated by a professional text competence of the coach (Knatz, 2012).

On the other hand, it should be pointed out that the absence of visual and paralinguistic communication data about the client, reduces the risk of social prejudice, transmission and projection (Clutterbuck, 2010, p. 17).

Probably the greatest advantage of e-mail coaching, however, is that in principle any amount of time is available for writing and reading a message, which is characteristic of e-mail coaching, together with the release from time pressure, offers the client a valuable space for independent self-reflection (Clutterbuck, 2010, p. 16; Reindl et al., 2012).

Voice Mail Coaching

Just like e-mail communication, voice mail communication is an asynchronous communication medium with the advantage that client and coach are not involved in a common time flow and therefore have to communicate under time pressure.

The most important difference to e-mail coaching is that in addition to the linguistic, there is also the paralinguistic media component with its positive possibilities. For this reason, there is no need for writing, and all the positive features that also characterise telephone coaching are available.

Video Mail Coaching

The same applies to video mail coaching, which in addition to the auditory communication data just mentioned also covers the area of 2D visuality, making it a direct neighbour of the video coaching.

Avatar Coaching

Avatars are electronically generated 3D visual phenomena in virtual worlds (Döring, 2003, pp. 98–109). Avatars have similarities with 'real' people, in terms of their external appearance, but also with regard to their non-verbal body expressions. The visuality of avatars must be enriched by synchronous or asynchronous audio or text communication. Accordingly, avatar communication can be used for coaching, both as synchronous and as asynchronous coaching formats (Andrews, 2014; Berninger-Schäfer, 2017, pp. 54–57).

Avatar coaching has the advantage that a client can identify strongly with his avatar and his actions, especially emotionally (Bredl et al., 2012) and has the possibility to determine not only his own appearance but also that of the coach. In this way, clients provide valuable diagnostic information. In addition, alternative courses of action can be tested without risk.

These advantages are contrasted by clear disadvantages. In addition to the usually technically demanding access requirements and operating requirements, the artificiality and the resulting lack of authenticity of all non-verbal body expressions and the severe limitations of eye contact should be mentioned here.

Natural Problem-Solving Tools

Coaching problem-solving tools that are produced and received without technical aids (such as the shaping of plasticine) or that are produced with non-electronic aids (such as a felt-tip pen) (Schreyögg, 2012, pp. 315–339) can be divided into three groups, namely natural 3D and 2D visual tools and auditory tools. These tools are only mentioned in this chapter because they can also be linked to electronic communication media. This is especially true for video communication, which allows the coach to observe the client, e.g. while labelling and positioning or moving index cards on his desk or floor.

Electronic Problem-Solving Tools

Electronic Non-coaching-Specific Problem-Solving Tools

Electronic problem-solving tools that are not specific to coaching and that can also be used for coaching can be divided into three groups, namely:

1. 2D visual tools, such as PowerPoint documents, electronic text, photos and videos.
2. Aids for recording and reproducing acoustic phenomena, such as dictation machines.
3. 3D visualisations not specific to coaching.

Electronic Coaching-Specific Problem-Solving Tools

In recent years, a variety of coaching-specific electronic problem-solving tools have been developed for coaching (Geißler, 2016a, b). In order not to go beyond the scope of this chapter, only a few of them will be presented below.

The historically first coaching-specific electronic problem-solving tool was the Virtual Coaching (VC) (Geißler, 2012, 2018; Geißler et al., 2013, 2014). It is—with reference to different coaching topics or occasions, such as transfer coaching (Greif & Benning-Rohnke, 2015)—primarily text-based and is suitable for synchronous and sequential connection with telephone coaching. It focuses on predefined coaching questions, which clients are to answer in self-coaching on the one hand and in dialogue with the coach on the other. The written answers can be additionally illustrated with photos. Due to its distinct textuality, it is a good idea to combine this tool with accentuated visual electronic tools.

CAI® (Berninger-Schäfer et al., 2018) is a tool that uses telephone or video communication as its primary basic medium and is accentuated both textually and visually. On the one hand, it offers the possibility of synchronously writing down the most important points and findings of the dialogue between coach and client. If required, the coach can use electronic coaching questions during the coaching process and a variety of different predefined and designable 2D visualizations, such as the inner team, the resource tree and various background images.

CoachingSpaces (Krause, 2018), a tool that uses telephone or video communication as its primary basic medium, has been developed for 3D visual constellation work and is thus accentuated pictorially. It can be used dialogue-integrated-synchronously or sequentially asynchronously. It offers several 3D visual landscapes for which different degrees of brightness can be selected. In its centre is a round or square stage on which different figures and objects can be placed. They can be designed in terms of, e.g. their size and colour and can be viewed from different positions. They cannot move, however. But there is the possibility to let the figures and objects communicate with the help of speech bubbles. Just like CAI,

CoachingSpaces can be used for self-coaching and can be connected synchronously and sequentially with all coaching communication media.

ProReal (Tinker et al., 2018) is used for synchronous and/or asynchronous 3D visual constellation work. However, it can only be connected to telephone coaching and differs from CoachingSpaces in that one can move freely in a virtual landscape and that human-like figures, avatars, are available, which can not only be designed in terms of their appearance, but also offer a variety of options of emotionally expressive movements (e.g. of anger or fear) in addition to the possibility of speech bubbles. Similar to CoachingSpaces, various objects can also be set up. And last, but not least, the whole scene can also be viewed from different points of view.

It is to be expected that e-coaching will continue to gain in importance and that further and more versatile problem-solving tools will be developed for it. In addition to traditional face-to-face coaching and various e-coaching formats, mixed forms and progressions could particularly increase because the various benefits can be combined according to need and possibility.

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Embodiment and Its Importance for Coaching

Maja Storch and Julia Weber

Introduction

Embodiment in scientific usage refers to the inclusion of the body in scientific thinking. A central assumption of the embodiment approach is the interaction (bi-directionality) of physical and psychological events (Liepelt et al., 2012). According to Barsalou (2009, 2015) every cognition, every emotion, and every affect has a sensomotoric component. In a review article of embodiment in current social psychological research, Meier et al. (2012) describe this approach with the brief sentence: " [...] all comprehension involves bodily simulation" (Meier et al., 2012, p. 4). Every insight, every understanding presupposes the content of what is to be understood has been physically simulated. This statement is extremely consequential, because it implies the body is granted an important role in the processing of information. Even such an abstract concept as the mathematical concept of infinity has a sensomotoric component, as Lakoff and Nuñez (2000) showed. Embodiment approaches regard man as a unity of body and mind. Physical and psychological aspects permanently interact and are inseparably connected with each other. Our actions, our judgement, the way and what we decide, the mood and emotional evaluation of situations—all this is closely linked to our sensual-motor impressions.

Taken to its logical conclusion, there are far-reaching effects of this thought on psychological practice. All approaches to coaching that are limited to sitting down and talking with the client neglect an essential component of psychological wholeness and are, therefore, in terms of their effectiveness—from the outset and unnecessarily—limited and incomplete.

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Case Study

A pastor signed up for coaching. In the first session, he explained that his charisma was important to him. He had received feedback on his work from some members of his congregation, whom he respected. It turned out that, on the one hand, he did a good job. He was creative and had ideas for the pastoral care unit, the various voluntary groups felt well supported by him and there were trusting and open discussions between them. On the other hand, he still had room for improvement with his sermons. It was not because of the contents; they were consistently interesting and current. It was because of his charisma. Somehow, he did not succeed in filling the church with energy. He did not know how to express this better without sounding too esoteric and shamanic. But as a celebrant in the Mass, he would have to exude a certain charisma. And when he looked at himself critically, he had to admit that preaching had always been the rather unpleasant part of his job. His relationship with God was one more of contemplation, he preferred to speak with two people and felt more comfortable with small groups. In psychological terms, he would probably be described as introverted. But preaching was part of the pastor's job description and he wanted to be coached.

The request from this pastor is an example of a coaching approach that requires embodiment work. The topic of charisma also applies to managers and politicians. All professions that require the ability to feel good on a stage and inspire a room full of people are affected by this ability.

Let us first look at the scientific background of embodiment approaches and then follow the concrete procedure of coaching with the pastor who wants to preach better.

Scientific Background of Embodiment

As Price et al. (2012) stated in their review article, studies on embodiment show that the experimental manipulation of body variables such as facial expression, hand movements, postures, and body movements have an influence on:

– Affect and emotion
– Motivational processes
– Brain activity
– The startle reflex
– Neuroendocrine processes
– Attitudes and evaluations

Slepian et al. (2015) note the smell of fish oil leads to being more suspicious (probably because of the proverb 'this smells fishy to me') (Lee & Schwarz, 2012), putting on a laboratory coat (Adam & Galinsky, 2012) increases attention, and 'hitting a hard ball' (Slepian et al., 2012) makes US citizens see faces as Republicans

rather than Democrats. In the same article, the authors report that wearing formal attire (such as for a job interview) leads to an abstract cognitive information processing style. Lobel (2015) explains a wealth of experiments that, taken together, provide an overwhelming amount of evidence that clearly supports the embodiment approach.

Bodywork in coaching can be viewed under two aspects—a theoretical memory and a self-regulatory aspect. From a theoretical memory point of view, bodywork is a method to create a broad information track for a well-adaptive neural network, in order to make it easier to activate. "The strength of a memory track can be understood as a function of the amount of information coupled together. The more information is coupled together, the higher the strength of memory" (Jäncke, 2013, p. 704). The memory psychologist Engelkamp (1997, 1998) has dealt with the so-called Do-effect in his multimodal memory theory. The Do-effect refers to empirically well-established results for remembering one's own actions. "For this purpose, the test subjects were read lists of simple, unconnected action phrases— such as 'combing the hair', 'opening the jam jar', 'bending the wire', 'closing the screen' etc.—and asked to remember them. The focus was on the following comparison: one group of test participants only listened to these sentences and another group performed the described actions. This second group remembered many more phrases than the first group" (Engelkamp, 1997, p. 11). Engelkamp explains this difference by the fact that when the action is executed, an additional encoding of the information takes place. This encoding concerns the sensory-motor level (see also Hoffmann & Engelkamp, 2013).

This psychological memory approach is supported by research on autonomous agents (Pfeifer, 1995; Pfeifer & Bongard, 2007). This term is used to describe robots that are able to act autonomously. For example, the designers of autonomous agents make small robots that can play football or learn to collect garbage independently. When trying to program machines accordingly, it turned out the learning programs are not successful without sensorimotor feedback. So it came about that the world of computer science and machines, of all places, supports an approach linking the human memory with the movements of the human body. This research approach belongs to the field of Embodied Cognitive Science. A detailed overview can be found in Tschacher and Scheier (2001), as well as in Tschacher (2010). In this theory, memory is understood as "an active, creative act of the entire organism based on sensorimotor-affective coordination processes [...]" (Leuzinger-Bohleber, 2001, p. 81). Information stored in the memory for a long time always has a physical component. Only the embodiment of information enables reliable memory. "Remembrance is dependent on [...] a holistic, embodied, sensorimotor-affective and cognitive process in and between persons" (Leuzinger-Bohleber, 2001, p. 83).

The second aspect, under which bodywork should play an important role in coaching, is that sensomotoric stimuli can influence moods, attitudes, and information processing (overview in Slepian, 2015). In the context of research on this topic, for example, experimentally altered postures are induced in the test participants. Participants are then tested whether they perceive their environment or themselves differently in different postures. Under the pretext of testing the ergonomics of work

furniture, Stepper (1992) used various furniture arrangements to bring the test subjects into a curved and an upright position, for example. The result of their investigation was that the people who received praise in an upright position felt more pride in their performance than those who received praise in a bent position. From the work of the emotion researcher Ekman (1992), it is known that people who are made to activate the facial muscles responsible for laughing by means of an experimental arrangement, report a brightening of the mood after some time. For Ekman this phenomenon is called facial feedback. It is assumed the brain perceives the changes in the facial muscles in a feedback process and subsequently generates the corresponding emotions. We have presented this research in detail elsewhere (Storch & Krause, 2017; Storch et al., 2010).

In recent years, numerous researchers have devoted themselves to this topic in an increasingly differentiated manner with imaginative experimental designs (Beilock & Goldin-Meadow, 2012; Topolinski & Sparenberg, 2012). Schneider et al. (2013) dealt with the interaction of psyche and body. They were able to show that participants who feel ambivalence tend to produce more back and forth movements on a Wii balance board. For this purpose they divided the participants into two groups. The subjects of both groups were positioned on a Wii Balance Board, which was calibrated for their neutral posture. While standing on the Balance Board, both groups were given an article on a screen 150 cm away, in which a minimum wage for young workers was demanded. Group one and group two read different versions of this topic. One article discussed the pros and cons of this topic (ambivalence induction), the other article only mentioned the positive aspects of the minimum wage. Both articles had the same text length. The number of lateral movements performed by the test persons was measured. The group that had read the article with pros and cons showed significantly more lateral movements during the stay on the balance board than the group with the unambiguous article.

In view of the research results presented, it seems obvious to use physical feedback processes for self-management. If a student has set himself the goal of performing confidently, he will be more successful if he develops a posture that supports this inner attitude. Influencing attitudes and moods through changes in posture has the advantage that posture can be arbitrarily influenced, even under high stress. It is easy to observe for yourself whether you are sitting upright or with sunken shoulders, and even in the most stressful examination situations you are still able to pull your shoulders back and consciously change your breathing. While many people find it difficult, especially in pressure situations, to change their moods and feelings directly, everyone succeeds in optimizing their posture in such a way that the appropriate mood can be created via the corresponding feedback processes. Bodywork is therefore an important technique in the perspective of self-management to influence one's own feelings. According to Kuhl (2001) and Storch and Kuhl (2013), the ability to regulate emotions is a central competence for maintaining mental health.

Meanwhile, it could be shown that posture not only influences mood and attitude, but information processing methods can also be changed (Macedonia & Knösche, 2011). The connection between posture and information processing is as follows:
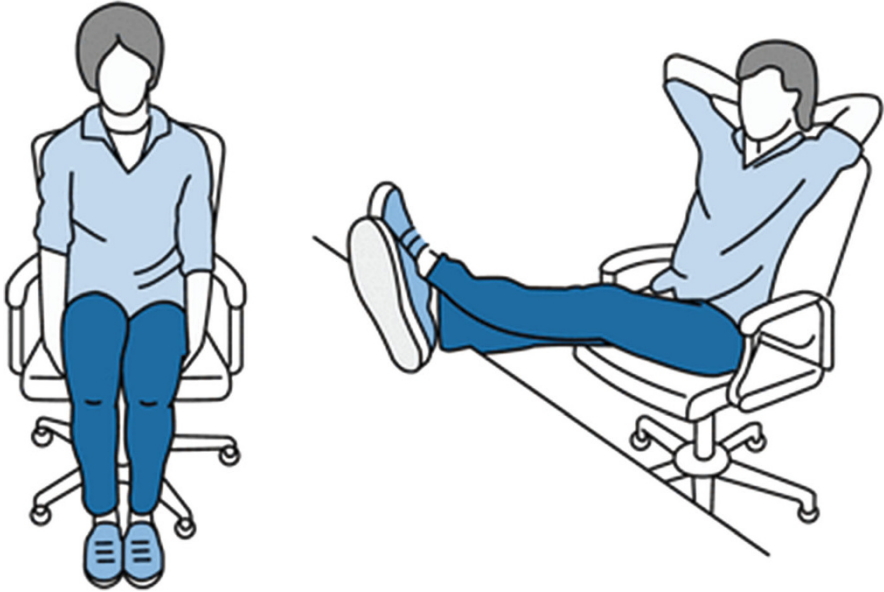
Fig. 1 The two posture conditions in the experiment by Park et al. (2013)

moods, affects, and emotions serve as a source of evaluation and information about the tolerability of a situation (see Gohm & Glore, 2002; Schwarz, 2003). Because moods, affects, and emotions reflect the brain's assessment of current situations and the brain has the task of providing the optimal strategies for the respective situation, different information processing processes are activated depending on the mood (see Kuhl, 2010).

Park et al. (2013) have provided an important basic study on this (Fig. 1). Their work concerns the question of whether the effects of body positions on psychological experience are universally the same or whether cultural differences exist. This question is extremely important for the use of embodiment techniques for self-management. In the training of self-management techniques, certain postures are often recommended as if they were cooking recipes with a guarantee of success. Some of the more recent studies on the influence of power poses on neuroendocrinological processes (testosterone) and the willingness to act, go in the direction of adopting a power pose if one wants to put oneself in a powerful and risk-taking mood (Carney et al., 2010). But results of Carney et al. could not be replicated in a recent study (Ranehill et al., 2015). This approach of working with embodiment will be discussed in more detail at this point, because there are a lot of offers, what are working with this kind of imitation.

If one follows the arguments of Barsalou (2009, 2015), then such a one-fits-all imitation approach in any case is wrong, because the meaning of a pose is generated by the individual experience and the simulation of body conditions coupled to
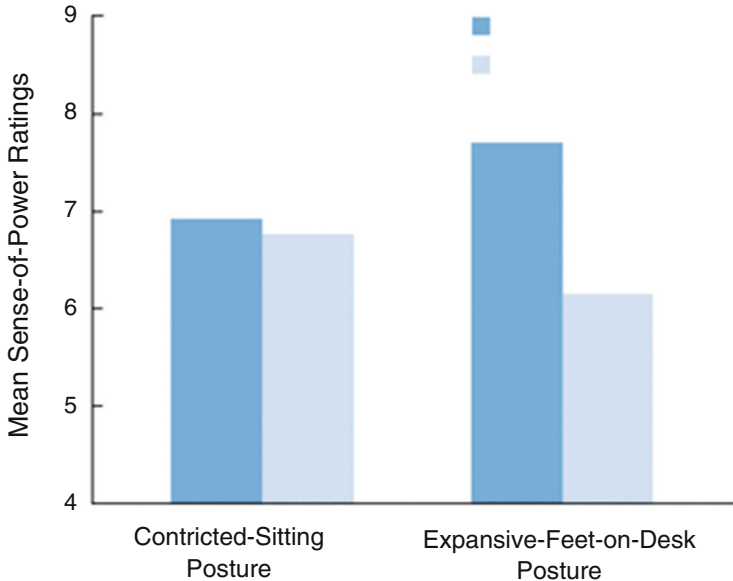
Fig. 2 Average values on the Sense of Power Scale (Huang et al., 2011) as a function of cultural background and posture condition

it. This is dependent on what an individual has internalized in terms of values, cultural norms, and personal memories. Park et al. (2013) investigated this effect.

Under the pretext of testing the ergonomics of office chairs, subjects born in the United States and subjects born in East Asia were randomly placed in two different poses (64 men, 42 women, 61 of them from the United States, 45 from East Asia): once in an expansive power pose and once in a reclined sitting position. This sitting posture had to be maintained for 3 min, after which the participants filled out the Sense of Power Scale (Huang et al., 2011), which measures the individual's sense of strength and power. On a scale of 1 (not at all) to 11 (very strong), the participants had to indicate how much the following terms applied to their current mood: in control, in charge, powerful, dominant, weak, dependent, and powerless (Fig. 2).

Park et al. (2013) showed power poses not only did not trigger the feeling of power among representatives of East Asian cultures, but even weakened it! The authors attribute this effect to the fact the power poses of people from the East Asian cultural area create a conflict with the East Asian value system, which is aimed more at fitting in as a member of a community than at shining as an individual. A power pose, therefore, creates an inconsistency in the psychic system of the East Asian participants, which in turn leads to a feeling of weakness.

The conclusion from this experiment for self-management is clear: when the personal embodiment is developed in coaching, there are no guidelines at all! An

embodiment that is grafted onto a person according to foreign standards cannot only be ineffective, but as the above experiment shows, it can even have a harmful effect.

Embodiment in Coaching Practice

How can it be possible to help someone to an embodiment that supports the intention they have expressed without forcing the client to imitate it? The procedure described below is based on the Zurich Resource Model ZRM training (Storch & Krause, 2017), a resource-activating self-management training in which embodiment work has a fixed place.

At the beginning of this work, a picture is selected by the client which shows positive somatic markers with regard to the expressed intention (Storch & Krause, 2017). The pictures are taken from a resource-activating picture file (Krause & Storch, 2018). For the chosen picture, a so-called motto-goal is developed by means of a brainstorming procedure developed for the ZRM training, the idea basket.

For his intention to preach with more charisma, the pastor chose the image of a mountaineer who had climbed a peak and stretched his arms into the sky rejoicing. His motto-goal for this image was: "Heavenly shouting fills my chest." He associated a feeling of great joy with this motto-goal. The heavenly shouting gave him the attitude of being a mouthpiece of higher powers. "Just as the fire of Pentecost came over the apostles, so the heavenly shouting goes into me. It then speaks out of me, spontaneously and cheerfully. It is no longer the little earthworm who fidgets with inspiring the churchgoers, but it is something higher, more powerful than I am. On the one hand this gives me great serenity, on the other hand I feel very activated and vitalized."

From the picture and the resulting motto-goal, the pastor worked out his individual embodiment for his preaching situation. While building up an embodiment, the coach stood next to the client at an angle of 45 degrees in a distance that takes the body space of the client into account appropriately. During the entire embodiment build-up, he used a technique from psychodrama, called doubling. This means the coach acts like a double of the client and reflects the entire body of the client. This includes the anatomical posture as well as the muscle tone, the breathing rhythm, or the line of vision. Imaginations can also be asked for. Through synchrony processes, as they can arise in the course of an Embodied Communication (Storch & Tschacher, 2015), it is likely that in the coach, who is attentively matching the client, similar feelings arise as the client has them. Often inner images or ideas for new movement impulses also emerge in the coach during this type of work, which he can give to the client as a suggestion in the sense of a basket of ideas.

The embodiment work begins with the question: Which body events does the motto-goal trigger in the client? It is helpful if the client and the coach recite the motto-goal a couple of times, so the new inner attitude can manifest itself in the

body. First of all, a so-called macro version is worked out, i.e., a figure or a sequence of movements that resembles a Tai Chi exercise.

The pastor had as a first, immediate impulse for the embodiment of his motto-goal, the arms stretched upward, a movement of receiving. As a result of the change in arm position, his stance became more wide-legged and his breathing reached deep down into the abdomen. A smile spread across his face. When asked about inner images, he answered that he was just imagining himself standing in a field of light coming from the sky and flowing through him. When asked whether this embodiment would change his style of preaching, he answered: "I feel a double effect. On the one hand, this embodiment makes me more stable. I feel safe, probably because of the fact that I stand with my legs apart. And then, the joy that is conveyed to me by the heavenly stream of light creates an inner serenity that makes me a chatterbox in a very pleasant way. It is a feeling as if the words are bubbling out of me by themselves. This is a huge difference to my previous condition. It feels great!"

For this chapter, we have chosen the example of a pastor with strong Christian faith to demonstrate that a fitting embodiment has to adapt itself closely to the client's existing experiences and values. For a person without strong faith such an embodiment would be completely absurd. If the embodiment is tailor-made to the psyche of the client, this bodywork can support the desired willingness to act with great efficiency.

Since it was not advisable for the pastor in our example to stretch out his arms in the air during his sermon, we developed a micro-movement following the macro version. The micro-movement was adjusted to the situation in which it was to be applied. In the case of a sermon, the pastor stood behind a lectern, the congregation could not see what he was doing with his legs. Therefore, it was advisable to take the broad-legged stand during the sermon. By generally straightening his body and slightly raising his head, the pastor succeeded in evoking the imagination of the heavenly light that flooded him and inspired him to speak.

The macro version of the embodiment should be practiced daily. The more often the macro is practiced, the stronger the neural net becomes and the more reliable the generation of the desired inner attitude becomes. The micro-movement is used when the situation requires it.

Open Questions

Despite the positive development of focusing on the whole person with his body, Koch (2011) still sees gaps. She criticizes that clinical psychology and health sciences have so far hardly received the embodiment approach. This is despite the fact that approach and avoidance movements have proven to be a fundamental dimension of motivation (Neumann, 2003, quoted by Koch, 2011, p. 6).

Tschacher et al. (2012, 2013, 2014) at the University of Bern have been investigating for several years now the extent to which the physical synchronization of movements has a concrete influence on the success of psychotherapeutic

interactions. Their investigations can also be transferred to pedagogical or psychoeducational contexts. Embodiment is a relatively young field of research. It is to be hoped that many young scientists will become enthusiastic about this topic!

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Emotion Regulation and Coaching

Christian Sell, Heidi Möller, and Cord Benecke

Mike: A Case Study from Practice

The personnel department of a medium-sized company contacted me (H.M.) asking for coaching for a new group leader. Mike was in his mid-40s and worked in sales. There were some grumbles from his employees, which the HR manager interpreted as a sign of dissatisfaction in the team. He mentioned Mike's leadership style and that there was a discrepancy between Mike's style and the highly staff-oriented culture of the organization. Mike's performance in sales, however, was undisputed. He had been hired based on his excellent knowledge of the industry and previous sales track record, and has now delivered a good sales performance in his new role. In the tripartite discussion between the coach, Mike and the sponsor it emerged that this role was Mike's first management position. Further, he had moved to the company from a different region and from a company with a different culture that was less employee-oriented than this new company. His style was to speak "directly," if the team did not deliver. His feedback was perceived by the team as "too confrontational," "too emotional," or even as "freaking out". Mike agreed to the coaching, albeit being skeptical of it. He seemed at odds with his team's feedback concerning his behavior.

Part of the problem in this case related to the way in which Mike regulated his emotions. It seemed that Mike's impulses were translated into behaviors without much mitigation, in the form of outbursts of rage. In psychological terms, emotion regulation has a central role in self-control and contributes to relationship formation. Emotional management is also necessary to help individuals cope with complex interpersonal tasks, such as personnel management (Gooty et al., 2010; Haver et al., 2013) and in maintaining mental stability (Barnow, 2012). With Mike, we assumed

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that an understanding of emotion regulation and how it can be development would be a useful focus for the coaching relationship.

However, before we explore the case further, we shall move on and review the wider literature on emotions and emotion regulation.

Theoretical Basics

Emotions, Feelings, Motives: Clarification of Concepts and Theoretical Contexts

In everyday language, and even within psychology, there is no uniform use of terms for emotional processes. In this chapter, we essentially follow the work of Krause (Krause, 2012) to distinguish between individual aspects of the emotional system.

Emotion is the most general concept. It is a psychophysiological term to describe the overall event of an emotional response. In many places the term *affect* is used synonymously with the term emotion. Krause (2012), however, makes a distinction. The involuntary physical activation of the endocrine system leading to a readiness to act and belonging to the emotion is called affect here. For some authors, the consciously experienced *feeling*, is an optional component of emotional processes (Otto et al., 2000). *Moods* are usually understood as states of longer duration, lower intensity, and less object relatedness (ibid.). Emotional expression, whether deliberate or involuntary, takes place, for example, through facial expressions and other motor functions, as well as through voice, smell, sitting position, and much more.

Within the psychology of emotions there are different research traditions: evolutionary, physiological, cognitive, and social constructivist. Each has their own methical approaches and basic assumptions and thus offers different concepts of emotion. Despite all their differences, there is at least a far-reaching consensus about understanding emotions as processes in which different reaction systems are involved (Krause, 2012). However, there is still no uniform model that integrates all subsystems. This chapter draws on Oatley and Jenkins (1996) model, as the latter takes into account various components and also focuses on the connection between emotion and motivation, which is important in the later discussion of the case:

(1) An emotion is usually caused by the fact that a person—consciously or unconsciously— evaluates an event as significant for an important concern (a goal).
(2) The core of an emotion is readiness to act and the promotion of an action plan; an emotion gives priority to one action or to a small number of actions. It thus can compete with other mental processes or actions.
(3) An emotion is usually experienced as a certain mental state, sometimes accompanied or followed by physical changes, as well as by expressions and actions (Oatley & Jenkins, 1996).

Accordingly, emotions are closely linked to motivational systems. Any attempt at understanding emotional processes without a link to motivation theory will fail to provide a comprehensive understanding.

We understand motives, i.e., the reasons according to which we act, as the linking of certain target states with certain emotional states (Rheinberg & Vollmeyer, 2012). The fulfillment of motives, classically performance achievements, power or recognition, but also intimacy, curiosity and others (cf. Sachse, 2006), usually goes hand in hand with positive emotions. If there is a discrepancy between the current situation (or our inner evaluation of it) and a prevailing motive, negative emotions are triggered. This is often accompanied by a desire to reduce the discrepancy between target and actual state, and it is this activation that we call *motivation*.

Emotions thus motivate us toward certain actions, and can, in turn, also be regulated by motivational actions. Depending on the subjective urgency of the target-actuality discrepancy, different emotions with varying intensities may arise. For their part, these emotions already give certain "recommendations for action," which we experience as behavioral impulses. Directly following these spontaneous impulses, that is: acting upon them, is *a* form of emotion regulation. The emotion, and thus also the pressure to act, usually weakens once we give in to it. In many cases, however, specifically in complex social situations, such as work, and in the case of Mike, a combination of different mechanisms may be needed to manage the relevant emotions in a more nuanced way.

Forms of Emotion Regulation: An Attempt at a Taxonomy

As with the concept of emotion, there also is no completely uniform definition of emotion regulation within psychology. There is relative consensus, however, that emotion regulation can also fail and that the ability to regulate emotions effectively is an important aspect of mental health (Barnow, 2012; Benecke & Brauner, 2017). Following Gross (2001), we suggest a broad definition of *emotion regulation*:

> Emotional regulation includes all conscious and unconscious strategies for strengthening, maintaining or weakening one or more component of an emotional reaction (Gross, 2001, p. 215).

In the following, an attempt will be made to systematize the multitude of emotion regulation processes described in the literature (see Table 1). On the one hand, we distinguish between unconscious, quasi-automatically executed regulation processes and those that are subject to conscious control. On the other hand, some mechanisms of emotion regulation are based on concrete actions or interpersonal interaction with others, while other processes take place purely intrapsychically.

At the *conscious, reflexive level of emotion regulation*, there are deliberate actions we can take to influence our own emotional state (Fonagy et al., 2004; Gross, 2001). Many of the strategies for coping systematized by Lazarus and Folkman (1984) fall into this category. One conscious intrapsychic strategy, for example, is cognitive

Table 1 A taxonomy of forms of regulation (adapted from Benecke & Brauner, 2017)

	Acting/interpersonal	Intrapsychich
Unconsciously/automatic	Implicit relationship pattern	Intrapsychic defenses
Consciously/reflexive	Problem-orientated/social coping	Intrapsychic coping

reappraisal (Gross, 2001). It attempts to change the emotional response to a given situation by reinterpreting its meaning. For example, negative feedback on one's own work may initially trigger very negative feelings. This could then be reassessed in a second step as a motivating learning experience. More recent concepts in cognitive psychology are reflective emotion regulation (Holodynski et al., 2013), mindfulness and acceptance (e.g., Heidenreich & Michalak, 2009), and detached mindfulness (Wells, 2011). Relevant psychodynamic concepts here are mentalized affectivity (Fonagy et al., 2004), or the affect-related structural functions described by the Task Force Operationalized Psychodynamic Diagnosis (OPD Task Force, 2008).

At the acting and interpersonal level, conscious emotion regulation can take place, for example, through problem-oriented coping (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). This is directed toward the conditions that trigger emotions, combined with the search for alternative options for action. Social coping, i.e., the search for socially supportive others, is also to be found here.

Reflexive forms of emotion regulation are generally regarded as "mature" and "adaptive." The individual can consciously experience their own emotions (even very negative ones) without having to take unconscious "countermeasures" beforehand. However, there are also a number of maladaptive forms of emotion regulation on the conscious level, such as self-medication or experiential avoidance (Sloan, 2004). The latter tries to avoid negative feelings or other inner experiences by avoidant action or also intrapsychically by intentional mental distraction.

The area of *unconscious, automatic forms of regulation* includes processes that directly modify an emerging emotion without willful intervention or influence, in such a way that certain emotions do not even arise. As with the consciously applied strategies, the unconscious regulation of emotions can also be divided into adaptive and maladaptive strategies. Intrapsychically, unconscious emotion regulation encompasses many of the defense mechanisms described in psychoanalysis. Freud saw the "real goal" of defense as "the suppression of affect formation" (Freud, 1915, p. 277). Intrapsychic defense mechanisms are essentially unconscious cognitive procedures that are used to keep motivational impulses and associated feelings out of consciousness. The emotion, for example, is denied, reversed, or shifted to another goal. In the context of cognitive behavioral therapy, unconscious forms of the above-mentioned experiential avoidance are described in a comparable way.

At the level of action and interpersonal behavior, unconscious forms of emotion regulation can also be found. Among other things, these include implicit patterns in relationship behavior, in which, for example, the respective interaction partners are (or should be) "brought" to such actions, which have a regulating effect on one's

own emotionality (Bänninger-Huber, 1996). Thus, paradoxically, it is conceivable that at the level of emotion regulation I benefit if others do not behave according to my ideas, because then in a supposedly justified way, I can finally blow off some steam by bursting into rage about these others' incompetence or insubordination. The "modes of resolution" of unconscious conflicts described within the Operationalized Psychodynamic Diagnosis system (OPD; OPD Task Force, 2008) can by and large be located here: unconscious conflicts are linked to affects that are unbearable for the respective individual, and the behavior patterns and relationship patterns described in the solution modes serve the interpersonal defense against these affects. In other words, the OPD conflict solution modes can be understood as complex, habitual emotion regulation strategies (cf. Benecke & Möller, 2014).

Significance for Coaching

Emotion Work: Emotion Regulation at the Workplace

Although, as Briner (1999) points out, emotions are of fundamental importance for almost all aspects of the world of work, up to the turn of the millennium there was comparatively little research on them. In recent years, however, the research landscape in occupational and organizational psychology has begun to change in this respect. Emotional experiences and emotion regulation are increasingly being researched within the framework of methodologically demanding studies. Miner et al. (2005), for example, used portable computers in a naturalistic setting to investigate the relationship between work-related events and the mood of employees in the production and service sectors. The results show that the majority of the variance in the reported emotions was found within the persons; most employees are confronted with both negative and positive emotions throughout the working day. Positive events triggered more positive feelings and negative events more negative feelings. However, the connection for negative feelings was almost five times stronger than that for positive feelings. Also, when positive and negative events occurred together, primarily negative feelings were triggered. Findings such as these suggest that dealing with negative emotions in the workplace is an unavoidable challenge for most people. This seems all the more relevant since it can be assumed that the unregulated expression of these negative emotions will usually—as in the case of Mike—hardly be compatible with the company objectives and the professional role.

The term *emotion work* refers to the regulation of emotions at the workplace. The concept was introduced as "emotional labor" by the occupational sociologist Hochschild (1979, 1983), initially specifically for activities in the service sector. Hochschild investigated the working conditions of stewardesses. She described the expression of positive emotions as part of the professional demands placed on them. Stewardesses are expected to be friendly, even when dealing with unfriendly or unpleasant passengers. The latter may often spontaneously trigger anger or other

negative emotions. Accordingly, Hochschild viewed emotional labor to mean the psychological work that is necessary to ensure the emotional expression corresponding to the professional role even in the absence of the corresponding emotion or even in the presence of a completely different emotion (e.g., anger).

In Hochschild's further research, the concept was used more and more broadly. Under the now more commonly used term emotion work, studies investigated the emotion regulation of police officers, doctors, and nursing professionals (overview at Zapf, 2002), as well as in personnel management (Haver et al., 2013). In some of these studies, the functional aspects of emotion work were differentiated further following the original findings of Hochschild. For example, Smith and Kleinman (1989) demonstrated in a study of prospective doctors how emotion work allows the distancing of strong emerging feelings such as disgust or sexual arousal and thus the maintenance of an appropriate professional posture. The concept, with appropriate modifications, proved to be applicable to all forms of work related activity, whereby the share of emotion work in the total workload varies considerably between different professions and organizations (Rastetter, 1999). The concept makes it tangible that effective work always includes, to varying degrees, work on one's own emotions and their regulation.

Hochschild (1983) had already distinguished between two forms of emotion work, which were subsequently integrated into more extensive conceptual considerations. Zapf (2002, p. 251ff) describes as the first stage of emotion work the case that no emotional regulation is necessary, i.e., the spontaneously felt, "real" feelings are also the professionally desired emotions and can therefore be expressed directly. Only if this is not the case does emotion work in the sense of Hochschild (1983) become necessary. The latter can be further differentiated into *surface acting* and *deep acting*. Surface acting means setting up the emotional expression desired in one's job in spite of opposing emotional sensitivities. Deep acting, on the other hand, refers to inner-psychic attempts to evoke feelings that match the emotional expression desired in one's job.

Hochschild essentially had cognitive techniques in mind here, such as relaxation, cognitive control, or imaginative techniques (cf. Rastetter, 1999). The last case described by Zapf (2002) is that there is no regulation of emotion, although it would have been necessary, and then the emotion desired for the job is not expressed accordingly. Rafaeli and Sutton (1987) refer to this as *emotional deviation*. It can either occur intentionally, due to a lack of conformity with the rules of display in the organization, or unintentionally, because it is not possible for the person concerned at the given moment. With regard to coaching, it should be added that it does not necessarily have to be either-or. Mike, for example, states, on the one hand, that he cannot understand "having to handle everyone with kid gloves" at his new employer, but on the other hand, we can also ask, solely on the basis of the case history, whether he currently has appropriate strategies for emotion regulation at his disposal in the first place.

Humphrey et al. (2008) developed conceptually how the field of emotion regulation is relevant for executives such as Mike. They worked out an integration of the literature on leadership with the concept of emotion work and found some central

differences between the emotion work required of executives and emotion work in the service sector. On the one hand, executives are usually not limited to a few desired emotions (such as friendliness in the case of stewardesses), but must show a wide range of emotions when dealing with their employees and be able to choose between them. On the other hand, executives are usually also entrusted with the regulation of their employees' emotions. As Hartkamp (2016) convincingly demonstrates, leaders are expected to set an example and—in the psychoanalytic sense— support their employees' ego functions, especially in times of crisis. The concept of authentic leadership (Gardner et al., 2009) takes up this line of thought.

A series of empirical studies investigated the effects of different forms of emotion work on individual and organizational variables. An overview of the health consequences of emotion work in the service sector can be found in Zapf (2002). In summary, it can be said that there is no evidence that the need for frequent emotional work is per se related to negative psychological consequences or low job satisfaction. Surface acting and the resulting dissonance between feeling and emotional expression, however, is positively correlated with burnout symptoms and negatively correlated with job satisfaction, especially if additional task-related stressors (time pressure, organizational problems, goal uncertainty) are present. A high identification with the professional role seems to be a protective factor here. Haver et al. (2013) summarize the findings on emotion work among executives in a meta-analysis: deep acting has been shown to have positive effects on motivation, job satisfaction, and development opportunities for employees. The ability to express one's own emotions as well as empathy, emotional intelligence, and impulse control facilitate deep acting in team leaders. Surface acting is associated with higher stress levels—presumably due to the high inner dissonance—an effect that is again intensified in times of crisis.

Possibilities in Coaching: Emotional Regulation and Change Processes

The research results mentioned above show that emotion regulation is a core competence in many areas of the world of work, both with regard to health factors as well as with regard to the quality of the work performed, including personnel management. In order to address the possibility of positively influencing emotion regulation through coaching, a connection between the above-proposed taxonomy of its forms (conscious and unconscious, intrapsychic and acting/interpersonal) and the concept of emotion work might be useful. Both forms of emotion work in the sense of Hochschild are conscious, reflexive forms of emotional regulation. Surface acting, that is: the deliberate control of emotional expression even with opposing feelings, is a form of acting regulation that is limited to a subsystem of emotion, i.e., emotional expression. For deep acting, the modification of the experienced feeling in the sense of the professionally necessary emotion expression, Hochschild calls purely upon

intrapsychic strategies (relaxation, cognitive control, imagination). However, inter-personal forms of deep acting such as collegial exchange or problem-oriented coping are also conceivable.

A uniform finding of studies on emotion work is that surface acting has long-term negative effects for the individual and the organization, whereas deep acting has rather positive effects. We see a potential approach for coaching with clients for whom emotion regulation is an issue in the possibly necessary conversion from surface to deep acting. Interventions on this level include the creation of awareness of the importance of emotion regulation (psychoeducation) as well as the training of cognitive and relaxation techniques.

In addition to the client's willingness to change and the organizational context, the psychological possibilities of the client to change and the strength of the problematic emotions to be regulated are important factors in achieving successful outcomes. This is where the concept of emotion work with its narrow focus on conscious processes may come up against its limits. Cognitive psychology names the ability to exercise executive control as the most important prerequisite for conscious, reflexive regulation. Executive functions generally refer to mental pro-cesses that serve behavioral control in consideration of environmental conditions, such as goal setting, planning, and impulse control. Very violent or very frequently occurring negative feelings such as fear or anger, however, often severely restrict these executive functions and thus stand in the way of effective emotion work. In these cases, it should occur to us that the unconscious, automatic mechanisms of emotion regulation may not work sufficiently well. Conversely, a successful con-scious emotion regulation—or even some of the cases named by Zapf (2002) in which the spontaneously experienced, "real" feelings are directly also the profes-sionally desired ones—are usually preceded by unconscious regulation processes, so that we either do not consciously experience inappropriate feelings at all or only to a manageable extent.

In our experience, some coaches work habitually, following their training and certain theoretical directions, more on conscious mechanisms of emotion regulation, while others primarily focus on the unconscious. Similarly, some coaches focus primarily on intrapsychic processes, while others focus primarily on action. It seems important for good coaching practice that, despite a focus on the level of concrete interventions, the other dimension is still thought through conceptually. The term emotion work has not yet been explicitly extended to unconscious processes of emotion regulation. How could these be taken into account? According to psycho-analytical theory, the form and quality of these unconscious regulatory mechanisms, referred to here as defenses, are determined by the intrapsychic conflicts that are of particular relevance to us, and by our levels of structural integration. Structural integration here means basic psychological functions of relationship regulation and self-regulation such as self-reflection, affect tolerance, and empathy (OPD Task Force, 2008). From this, it becomes clear that our unconscious strategies for emotion regulation as compared to the conscious ones are comparatively deeply anchored in the personality. We assume that some of these mechanisms can also be changed

through coaching—although in each individual case the differential indication of coaching versus psychotherapy should be examined carefully.

One central process factor behind profound change seems to be the repeated focus on emotions that have so far been experienced as unmanageable (and have therefore been defended against unconsciously). In successful psychotherapeutic treatments, there is often an interplay between the activation of (previously avoided) negative emotions and a cognitive reflection on these emotional experiences. At the level of intervention, this is often reflected in references to the client's past—connections are made between current problems and the biographical development of inner-psychological components.

Since many unconscious regulatory processes have a high stability and intrapsychic functionality, their modification takes time—both in the sense of a sufficient number of contacts and in the sense of a sufficient duration of the overall process. It usually requires repeated runs in which the problematic emotions are activated, but not unconsciously regulated, i.e., repelled, in the previous way, but can be consciously experienced and "endured." As a result, the client will eventually, bit by bit, develop greater degrees of freedom for the development and establishment of other, more favorable regulatory mechanisms. In this way, the formerly unconsciously controlling emotions of the psychological event, including the associated motivational aspects, can be integrated into the conscious self. This results in a higher degree of self-congruence and self-consistency—including a new experience of self-efficacy in relation to the affective states previously experienced as unbearable.

Conclusion: Back to the Case Study

In the case of Mike, the team leader outlined at the beginning of this chapter, difficulties in his regulation of emotions led to interpersonal problems within the organization. By leading clients like Mike to understand more about their emotions and by exploring and jointly developing possible emotion regulation strategies, a coach can help them to develop insights into their own motivations and triggers as well as to learn more effective ways to manage emotional states that can cause conflicts at the workplace.

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Emotional Intelligence and Its Relevance for Coaching

Dana L. Joseph and David R. Glerum

Introduction

After the global financial crisis of 2008, many large organizations collapsed: employees lost their jobs, funding to organizational development programs was cut, and the effects were felt worldwide. Despite the disastrous economic climate for organizations, conditions at one particular organization improved. In fact, executives at this organization were seeing "dramatic" improvements not only in their success at work but also in their contributions to their communities and personal lives (Boyatzis et al., 2013, p. 17). What was the source of this success? This organization, the Fifth Third Bank Corporation, had partnered with academics at Case Western Reserve University to employ an executive coaching program that was grounded in improving the emotional intelligence (EI) of its leaders. The goal of this program was to facilitate the building of "resonant relationships" in which employees establish highly functional interpersonal relationships to aid in developing each other through EI (Goleman et al., 2002). The program involved three phases, the first of which set the stage for EI growth by allowing participants to work with a coach to reflect on their core values, create a personal vision statement, and receive 360° feedback from co-workers. As a component of this first phase and foundation for the phases to come, participants also learned about the effectiveness of EI for leadership. During the second phase a year later, participants completed a series of peer coaching exercises with the intention of developing skills to effectively coach others and inspire personal development. For the final phase, the organization

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implemented a series of workshops focused on developing competencies such as adaptability, mindfulness, empathy, and building emotionally intelligent organizations. Boyatzis et al. (2013) describe their EI coaching and development program as a success, noting the exceptional improvement of one particular executive who went through the EI coaching program at Fifth Third Bank, Mary Tuuk, who eventually became president of the organization, due partly to her participation in the EI coaching program, and went on to lead the company to substantial growth. Although this is only one example of a successful executive coaching program that is focused on EI, other examples abound, including the implementation of EI-related executive coaching in a conglomerate of arts organizations who described the program as "invaluable" (Grossman, 2005, p. 1) as well as the use of EI-related employee coaching, assessment, and 360° feedback in a mining company which resulted in "very noticeable" changes in attitude, temperament, and professionalism (Schlatter & McDowall, 2014, p. 149).

Emotional Intelligence

As noted by Boyatzis et al. (2013), improvements in EI may lead to improvements in organizational effectiveness through coaching and development programs. But what does it mean for one to be emotionally intelligent? Below, we review the definition of EI and follow this review with a summary of research that has related EI to personal and professional success. In doing so, we highlight the multitude of conceptualizations of EI and lay the foundation for the incorporation of EI into executive coaching by noting past research on EI's relationship with work and life outcomes.

Ability Emotional Intelligence

The original definition of EI provided by Salovey and Mayer (1990) conceptualized EI as an ability, or more specifically, "the ability to carry out accurate reasoning about emotions and the ability to use emotions and emotional knowledge to enhance thought" (Mayer et al., 2008, p. 507). This definition is the most well-accepted conceptualization of EI (Côté, 2014) and it includes four branches: the ability to perceive, use, understand, and regulate emotion. These branches have been shown to relate to each other via the Cascading Model of EI (Joseph & Newman, 2010) in which emotion perception affects emotion regulation via emotion understanding (i.e., it is difficult to regulate emotion without first perceiving the emotion and understanding the emotion). As evidence that the ability model of EI appropriately conceptualizes EI as an intelligence, recent research has shown that ability EI can be represented as a dimension of cognitive ability (MacCann et al., 2014), which has helped to incorporate EI into traditional models of intelligence.

Mixed Emotional Intelligence

Although many have conceptualized EI as an ability, others have suggested that EI may be more appropriately defined as a personality trait (Petrides & Furnham, 2000) or as a constellation of emotional and social competencies (ESC; Bar-On, 1997; Cherniss, 2010; Goleman, 1995). For example, Bar-On's (1997) mixed model of EI includes adaptability, stress management, intrapersonal skills, interpersonal skills, and general mood. Similarly, Boyatzis et al.'s (2000) model of mixed EI includes relationship management, self-awareness, self-management, and social awareness, and Petrides and Furnham's (2000) model of mixed EI (which they refer to as trait EI) includes adaptability, assertiveness, emotion perception, emotion expression, emotion management in others, emotion regulation, impulsiveness, relationships, self-esteem, self-motivation, social awareness, stress management, empathy, happiness, and optimism. Although other mixed models of EI exist (e.g., Palmer & Stough, 2001), the aforementioned models adequately illustrate the differences between ability EI and mixed EI: whereas ability EI includes four dimensions of EI that are directly related to emotional abilities, mixed models of EI are much broader in scope and often involve traits that are not explicitly related to emotions (e.g., self-esteem). Because of their broad scope, mixed EI models have received criticism for a lack of construct validity (Daus & Ashkanasy, 2005), although recent efforts have helped to address these criticisms (Joseph et al., 2015). We argue that both models may be useful in executive coaching, noting that ability EI may be most appropriate for coaching issues that are emotion-related, while mixed EI may be more appropriate as a comprehensive coaching tool that includes a constellation of abilities.

EI and Success

EI and Personal Success

Empirical work has demonstrated that EI is important in interpersonal relationships (Mayer et al., 2008), predicting how enjoyable, wanted, and respected one feels in interpersonal interactions (Lopes et al., 2004). Furthermore, research suggests emotionally intelligent individuals feel as if they experience fewer destructive responses to conflict in relationships (Brackett et al., 2006) and are also perceived more positively by others (Brackett et al., 2006; Song et al., 2010). Recent meta-analytic evidence has also suggested that EI is related to mental, psychosomatic, and physical health (Martins et al., 2010; Schutte et al., 2007). Thus, it appears that EI is related to a host of personal success outcomes, including the quality of interpersonal relationships and health, which may be relevant for executive coaches who are wishing to improve their own or their clients' work–life balance and/or personal health.

EI and Professional Success

Several meta-analyses have examined the relationship between EI and job performance (Joseph et al., 2015; Joseph & Newman, 2010; O'Boyle et al., 2011; Van Rooy & Viswesvaran, 2004) with results suggesting that the mixed EI-performance relationship is stronger than the ability EI-performance relationship, which is largely due to the breadth of constructs that are included in mixed EI models (Joseph & Newman, 2010; Joseph et al., 2015). Beyond job performance, research suggests EI is related to a variety of additional professional success outcomes. For example, Harms and Credé (2010) found a positive meta-analytic correlation between EI and transformational leadership ($\widehat{\rho}$ = 0.59; however, after accounting for common source bias, this estimate was substantially weaker: $\widehat{\rho}$ = 0.12) and recent work suggests the ability to perceive emotion is positively related to negotiation performance (Elfenbein et al., 2007). EI has also been found to be related to team and organizational outcomes, including teamwork effectiveness in occupations that are characterized by high work demands (Chien Farh et al., 2012) and organizational performance (via team cohesiveness; Wilderom et al., 2015). Given that EI has been shown to be important for many organizational outcomes, EI is an attractive option for content coaching and may perhaps be an important competency for coaching itself.

How Is EI Relevant for Coaching?

Many have asserted that EI is important for coaching and some have even claimed that EI is "inextricably related" to coaching (Grant, 2007, p. 258), especially with regard to developing leadership skills and building relationships (Passmore, 2007, 2012; Caruso & Salovey, 2008; Feldman & Lankau, 2005; Peterson, 2011). We argue that EI is relevant for coaching in a variety of different ways. First, we argue that ability EI and mixed EI can be conceptualized as important competencies for executive coaches (i.e., we argue that executive coaches should be high on EI). Second, we argue that ability EI and mixed EI can also be a content area for coaches to focus on when developing their clients.

Emotional Intelligence as a Coaching Competency

One way in which EI is relevant for coaching is in its utility as a core competency for successful coaches. Notably, a wide variety of attempts have been aimed at developing coaching competency lists (see Blumberg, 2014, for a review of 23 such frameworks). These frameworks include the competency models of major coaching associations [e.g., Association for Coaching (AC), American Psychological

Association (APA), The Executive Coaching Forum (ECF), European Mentoring and Coaching Council (EMCC), International Coach Federation (ICF), Graduate School Alliance for Education in Coaching (GSAEC), and Worldwide Association of Business Coaches, (WABC)] and models developed by coaching theorists and researchers (Blumberg, 2014; Peterson, 2011). Unfortunately, Blumberg (2014) concluded that most of the competency lists are (a) deficient in addressing the full spectrum of knowledge, skills, abilities, and other characteristics needed to be an effective coach, (b) not based on the objective study of coaches, and (c) not grounded in empirical research. Therefore, future research is needed to validate these competency models. For example, recent efforts have reverse-engineered common competency frameworks (e.g., the ICF and GSAEC) and found that many of the competencies are directly aligned with mixed EI (Maltbia et al., 2014). In our own examination of the ECF and WABC competency models, we have also found that *89% and 55% of the competencies in these models, respectively, share content with the facets of common mixed EI models* (Bar-On, 1997; Boyatzis et al., 2000; Petrides & Furnham, 2000). Despite this overlap, initial evidence suggests that a coach's EI is not related to his/her coachee's perceived quality of the coaching relationship (Gregory & Levy, 2011), although the authors note that findings may be limited because of faking and bias that may have affected the coach's self-reported EI in this study. In addition, the client-reported perceived quality of the coaching relationship may not be the best indicator of the actual effectiveness of the coaching itself and future research should seek to examine the relationship between a coach's EI and coaching effectiveness.

In lieu of direct evidence of a relationship between a coach's EI and coaching effectiveness, we note that some have suggested knowledge of psychology, including knowledge of EI, is important for effective coaching (Feldman & Lankau, 2005; Peterson, 2011). In support of this, a recent study found that the effect of coaching on job performance is stronger for coaches who have a psychological background than those without such a background (Bozer et al., 2014). Nevertheless, more research is needed on both EI and knowledge of EI as competencies for coaching professionals, especially given the importance of social interaction and relationship building for effective coaching (Blumberg, 2014; Maltbia et al., 2014; Peterson, 2011). In summary, even though prior empirical research in organizations suggests that EI is related to job performance, effective social interaction, leadership, and team/organization effectiveness, more research is needed to confirm the importance of EI for coaching effectiveness.

Emotional Intelligence for Content Coaches

In addition to EI's relevance as a competency of executive coaches, the relevance of client EI as an area of focus for content coaches has also achieved popularity within the last decade (Passmore & Fillery-Travis, 2011). This type of EI coaching intervention is typically driven by theory that suggests EI can change within people (i.e.,

intentional change theory; Boyatzis, 2001). Notably, recent research suggests that EI can be changed through training programs (Cherniss et al., 2010; Grant, 2007) and that changes in EI result in improvements in well-being, relationship quality, employability, and even lower cortisol secretion (Cherniss et al., 2010; Hodzic et al., 2015; Kotsou et al., 2011; Nelis et al., 2011). Furthermore, a variety of management academics and practitioners have attempted to develop frameworks that propose both ability EI (David, 2005; Wiegand, 2007; Wolfe, 2007) and mixed EI (Hughes & Terrell, 2009; Wall, 2007) as content areas of coaching.

Unfortunately, very little research has attempted to verify the efficacy of these EI-related coaching interventions. However, some initial evidence suggests that EI can be developed as a result of coaching (Chapman, 2005; Cox & Patrick, 2003). Some evidence also suggests that coaching for EI not only increases self-reported client EI but also increases manager-rated client EI and judgments of whether the change in EI is sustainable (Wasylyshyn et al., 2006). An additional analysis of several hundred coaching case studies suggests that differences in leadership style may vary as a function of EI, with "remarkable" leaders demonstrating high EI and "toxic" leaders demonstrating low EI (Wasylyshyn et al., 2012), which also supports the inclusion of EI in executive coaching interventions. As an example of the successful application of EI to executive coaching, intentional change theory was applied to training internal coaches at a large European bank to be more emotionally intelligent who then coached internal leaders to be more emotionally intelligent (McKee et al., 2009). This led to managerial leadership growth, loyalty, communication, conflict resolution skills, passion, and development efficacy. Thus, not only is it potentially important for external executive coaches to focus on enhancing their clients' EI, but it is perhaps even more important for internal organizational coaches to develop their employees' EI so any positive effects are more likely to spread throughout the organization.

Despite initial evidence for the use of EI as a content area for coaching, future research should be wary of a potential paradox in EI improvement: often the very individuals who would benefit the most from EI development interventions are the ones who are not motivated to improve and/or resist these forms of interventions (Ciarrochi et al., 2002; Kruger & Dunning, 1999; Sheldon et al., 2014). These individuals may be dismissive of feedback regarding their own EI and may overestimate their own EI (see also Gregory & Levy, 2011). Although more research is needed to examine this effect for coaching in organizations, we argue that this effect may be reduced if the client is willing to be coached. For example, in Bharwaney's (2007) framework for EI enhancement through coaching, she includes willingness as a primary consideration in choosing whether to focus on the development of EI. Regardless of the potential for a paradox in EI improvement and its relevance for coaching, some argue that coaching is well-suited for improving EI. For example, Peterson (2011) notes that coaching, as a relatively powerful intervention, should be most appropriate for skills and competencies that are difficult to learn, such as EI.

Conclusion

In summary, coaches should seek to incorporate EI into practice by seeking to improve their own EI through professional development activities that focus on developing and building relationships as well as improving leadership skills. They should also consider incorporating EI into their coaching content—focusing on developing the emotional abilities and competencies of their clients. Although much work has been conducted on the relationship between EI and personal/professional success outcomes, we note that more empirical work is needed to: (a) determine the extent to which EI and knowledge of EI is a coaching competency that is important for effective coaching, (b) test the effectiveness of coaching interventions aimed at improving client EI, (c) examine the extent to which these interventions are effective across EI levels as an evaluation of the EI training paradox (i.e., are EI-related coaching interventions more effective for high EI individuals than low EI individuals as the EI training paradox would suggest?), and (d) examine differences in the effectiveness of EI coaching interventions that are led by professional coaches versus those that are led by managers/supervisors acting as coaches to their own employees (an approach that may be limited to the extent that there is a power difference between the supervisor and subordinates and to the extent that subordinates are given the opportunity to choose their own coach; Gregory & Levy, 2010, 2011; Spaten & Flensborg, 2013). Regardless of this need for future work, upon considering previous competency models for effective coaching, extant empirical work on EI and coaching, as well as the explicit relationship-based nature of coaching, it appears that EI holds promise as a competency and content area for coaching researchers and practitioners.

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Ethics and Ethical Competence in Coaching

Christoph Schmidt-Lellek

A Practical Example

The owner of a family business in the third generation, Ray, is in his early 50s, comes into coaching because he cannot decide whether to continue, sell or dissolve the company. Orders have declined sharply in recent years, and the threat of insolvency hangs over the business. The client questions his ability as an entrepreneur and the future of the business. But he feels a duty to his parents and especially to his employees. His strict sense of duty is characterized by maxims that he inherited from his mother: "*As an entrepreneur I always have to be a role model, the customer is always right, I am always on the debit side*", *etc.*. In addition, there is a long-smouldering conflict, as the mother, the former owner, has handed over the management to him, but has not really been able to let go of control of the company so far.

During the coaching it became clear that there is an imbalance in responsibility for others and responsibility for oneself, that the side of heteronomy (external determination) has always been much more powerful over the side of autonomy (self-determination) since he joined his parents' company after his engineering studies. For Ray, pursuing his own interests was always connected with feelings of guilt. The consequences were depressive tendencies, loss of energy and sleep disorders. The dilemma for Ray was either to give up himself inwardly, with a

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potential impact on his health and marriage (*I won't be able to take it much longer*, his wife said), or to deprive his employees on the basis of their livelihood and betray the heritage of his parents. The solution was finally found: After unsuccessful efforts to sell the company, Ray dissolved the company before it became insolvent. He developed social compensation plans for the employees as he wound up the company and found an interesting new position. The inner process of the client that enabled this solution thus presupposed an awareness of the conflict of values, in this case between the previously underexposed value of self-interest and the moral obligation towards others.

The Importance of Ethics for Coaching

Coaching as a profession, i.e. as responsible work on and with people, is more than a functional service that tries to achieve certain goals (cf. chapter "Professionalization in Coaching"). Professional action is not only to be seen in an instrumental meaning, but always carries ethical implications. Coaching is an intersubjective process that cannot be limited to being a function for something, because the interaction partners are supposed to adjust to each other in their whole personality (Schreyögg, 2004, p. 50). This implies a reflected ethical responsibility on the part of the coaches; it requires the willingness and ability to reflect on overarching values in their actions, which presupposes a sufficient degree of autonomy and differentiated self-reflexivity.

When asking about ethics in coaching, two areas need to be considered: (1) *The ethical behaviour of professionals*, as defined, for example, by professional associations in a "code of ethics" (examples: IOBC, 2019; dvct, 2015; ICF, 2014). This involves acting correctly in terms of professionalism; such as trustworthiness and confidentiality, in particular, responsibility for the creation of a professional relationship (Schmidt-Lellek, 2017), which is characterized by respect for the other person and for their autonomy. (2) *Competence in dealing with ethically relevant conflicts* that coaching clients deal with in their work (this can also touch on questions of business or corporate ethics). Beyond a violation of ethical norms, situations often need to be discussed in which ethical assessments are not clear or in which different values are opposed (conflicts of values or dilemmas). Ethical competence means recognizing conflicts of values as such and developing well-grounded criteria for responsible decisions, e.g. by establishing a connection to overarching values and anthropological principles.

Ultimately, every action in coaching has ethical implications, because coaching is "*a place of interruption of everyday processes and thus a place of reflection, of thoughtfulness and forethought*, and even if ethical issues are not explicitly addressed, they are simply always there, cannot be avoided" (Heintel, 2006, p. 201). "*There are no moral-free spaces in the world*" (Buer, 2008, p. 138), because every decision implies values that are often not consciously reflected upon, but which can be made accessible to consciousness in the free space of coaching.

Ethics is practical philosophy. It involves the reflection of values and norms that can serve as orientation for decisions. Ethics concerns the question of how one can achieve something good through one's behaviour that is beneficial to the life of the individual and to society. It invites us to consider: What in general may be a good, succeeding life—for oneself and for others? What are the goals of our action? What is permitted or required and what is not? What can be experienced as meaningful beyond functional purposes and what not? Which activities or tasks can a person, without harming or damaging others, execute in a vital connectedness with his or her own personality? This also raises the question about how narrow or broad the perceived value horizon is—between the value of earning money, having an interesting purpose in life with one's vocational work and participating in social processes, then co-responsibility for the success of the company, continuing to be responsible for the effects of the products manufactured and sold, right up to co-responsibility for the sustainable development in global contexts (with the dimensions of economy, ecology and social welfare; cf. Dietzfelbinger, 2008, p. 306).

The more that is feasible and available, the more the question of values and responsibility for the consequences of our actions arises. Ethics is the definition of the limits of what is feasible and the definition of the goals of what is desirable. In coaching, too, some methods and techniques promise a greater, faster, deeper effectiveness. But effectiveness is not enough as a motive for professional action. If coaching were to be understood only as a method for optimizing or enhancing the performance of coaching clients in their respective work functions, it would fall victim to the "triumph of the principle of functionality" (Buchinger, 2006, p. 29), and the freedom for open self-reflection would be threatened or restricted. The value orientation of action, the meaning of good functioning, could not even come into view. Meaningfulness means, among other things, being able to experience the reference to an overarching value of life. In the words of Nietzsche (1980, KSA 11, p. 506): "The value for life decides in the end"; i.e. values cannot be set arbitrarily, but only if they are able to sustain and promote life. If this reference is missing, motivation, wellbeing and even the health of an individual can be endangered. Or, to put it positively, according to the concept of salutogenesis (Antonovsky, 1987) a "sense of coherence"—with the criteria comprehensibility, manageability and meaningfulness—is a condition for health in working life.

Coaching is not a place for moral instruction, but a space for open questions and joint reflection. However, it can be part of the coach's tasks to initiate this questioning, to point out possible connections and to name ethically relevant aspects, if necessary, to address tabooed topics. Ethical responsibility of the coach implies not only seeing himself as an agent according to institutional demands, but rather to strengthen the freedom of choice, the awareness of paradoxes and dilemmas between different values (e.g. the concern of the organization and the concern of the individual) in order to tolerate them and to deal with them. This competence corresponds to the highest levels of moral development (*autonomous morality*) according to Kohlberg (1984).

Relevant Terms and Concepts

In the following, some terms and concepts will be discussed which can serve to structure ethical reflections.

Moral and *ethics* are often used synonymously. However, the following conceptual distinction is useful for the discussion: To act morally is a condition of living in community with others. The individual pursuit of happiness requires consideration for the same pursuit of others. Such consideration and empathy for the needs of others are the basis of all morality. *A morality* contains the particular rules, commandments and prohibitions that attempt to concretize this basic principle in the various contexts. *Ethics*, in contrast, is the reflection of values and moral judgements. As a philosophical discipline, ethics is a theory of morality; it seeks reasons for a morality and is intended to find out which rules are suitable to enable moral action in the respective social and cultural situation. Thus, it may be possible or even necessary to question a concrete moral norm on the basis of an ethical reflection. To this end, philosophy can also draw on empirical research results, such as the well documented "stages of moral development" (Kohlberg, 1984) or the "universal value structure" which has been the basis of cross cultural research in 60 countries (cf. chapter "Values"; Schwartz & Boehnke, 2004).

Values and *norms* are dialectically related to each other: *Value* means *wanting*, finding and striving for something—with varying degrees of breadth of horizon (see section below: *Narrowed Responsibility Horizon: Effects of Action*). A value is need-driven, it implies a movement from the inside out. *Norms*, on the other hand, contain the opposite movement from the outside to the inside: They represent the relationship of the social world to the individual, especially the institutionalizations created by humans. *Norm* means limitation of needs, adaptation and regulation, to be supposed to do something. Ethics reflects the tense polarity between values and norms. Ethically relevant conflicts can arise when the balance between these polarities is disturbed or lost: be it through an overemphasis on the outside, the norms, the power of institutions or organizations (e.g. with the respective corporate goals) or be it through an overemphasis on the inside, one's own values, which may appear as egocentricity, immoderateness, greed, as a lack of reference to others.

Thus, in coaching, it can be useful, on the one hand, to question an overpowering standardization that blocks one's own sense of values (see the case example above). If, for example, a client experiences himself/herself only as the executive organ of a company's guidelines without being able to establish an inner connection to the content of his/her work, then he/she should be encouraged to enter into conflict with such guidelines. Perhaps this will enable him to establish an inner connection or to reject a specification after appropriate reflection. On the other hand, it can become apparent in a coaching session that a client is instrumentalizing the institution in which he or she works or other people only for his or her own needs. Here it is important to point out to the client the reciprocity of give and take, to sensitize him or her to the legitimate demands of others, but also to explore, if necessary, what the reasons for their *egocentricity* might be. In practice, the method of *role reversal*

developed in psychodrama lends itself to this in order to enable empathy with the situation of the other person. The *Golden Rule* as the basis of all morality (*Do unto others as you would have them do unto you*) can be experienced in this way.

The dialectic between norms and values corresponds to the contradiction between an *ethics of duty* and an *ethics of aspiration* (or *deontological* vs. *teleological* ethics). The former approach is oriented towards given duties, e.g. to engage oneself *selflessly* (disregarding one's own interests) for the welfare of others, as it has been particularly emphasized in the Christian tradition. An ethics of aspiration is oriented towards one's own happiness and success, as it is classically formulated in the *eudaemonism* of Aristotle (1934). Now, ethically responsible action in business enterprises (just as in other life) cannot succeed with one pole or the other alone: Neither pure selflessness, nor pure self-centredness, can be a yardstick for successful life and thus for ethically responsible behaviour. Both would ultimately be illusionary, since successful life always takes place in mutual relations and dependencies (Schwartz speaks here of the polarity between "self-reference" and "self-transcendence"; cf. chapter "Values").

Ferdinand Buer attempted (within the framework of our concept of *life coaching*; Buer & Schmidt-Lellek, 2008, p. 151) to make a connection between the two basic ethical types when he focused on the *principle of responsibility* with reference to the ethics of responsibility (Jonas, 1979). While the concept of duty prefers unambiguous solutions (e.g.: *you must not lie, no matter what situation you find yourself in*), the concept of responsibility enables you to take the respective situation with its differences and diversities seriously, i.e. to consider the context for decisions. Responsibility as a central category of modern ethics means to *respond* autonomously to the respective challenges, as the philosopher Emmanuel Lévinas (1983, p. 224) in particular has pointed out: For him, the invitation to meet the other face to face and to *respond* to him is the basis of ethical action; it becomes apparent in responsible solidarity with others.

It can be seen as a characteristic of modern (or postmodern) living to have to deal with contradictions and uncertainties. This is the topic of Zygmunt Bauman's *postmodern ethics* (1993): Decisions are not to be made between *absolutely right* and *absolutely wrong*, but there are different possibilities, so that then the question of the criteria of an assessment arises (e.g. between *economically reasonable*, *aesthetically pleasing*, *politically correct*, *morally clean*). This is why the individual is all the more challenged with his or her moral judgement. Although this develops in the confrontation with conventionalized ethical norms (corresponding to the lower levels of moral development in Kohlberg, 1984), in the end one cannot rely on them alone. Therefore Bauman's conclusion is: "In case of doubt: question your conscience. Moral responsibility is the most personal and inalienable of human possessions and the most precious of human rights" (Bauman, 1993).

Ethical Issues and Areas of Conflict in Coaching

Dialogical Attitude of the Coach

It is part of the professional task of a coach to ensure, through their attitude and approach, that a space for open questions and joint reflection is created which is not dictated by the respective roles and functions. Since ethical conflicts are materialized in interaction situations, their discussion must also occur in social interaction (Schreyögg, 2004, p. 59). This can be done according to the model of the *Socratic dialogue:* Cognition and understanding takes place through the conversation between people as a joint search in questioning and in mutual resonances. The professionalism of the coach is not only and not primarily based on his or her expertise, but also on the ability

- to facilitate and support dialogical processes,
- to question supposed self-evident facts and certainties,
- to grasp or establish connections,
- to summon up patience and trust in the process of cognition of the other,
- to confront the client in the case of obvious misunderstandings or when then attitudes may be in conflict with wider norms,
- and in doing so to resist the temptation of certainties fixed dogmatically or by convention (Schmidt-Lellek, 2001, p. 205).

A Narrowed View of Mankind and Implicit Assumptions

Reflection on individual decisions or values can be enriched by asking about our implicit view of mankind, which is often little known to us with its implicit pre-suppositions. A narrowed concept of mankind can pose an ethical problem: If, for example, an entrepreneur regards their employees merely as *human capital,* that should be used as efficiently as possible, then the employees cannot be perceived in their personality. They will be reduced to their functionality, with potentially serious consequences for the well-being of the employees, as well as for the team climate and the corporate culture. The ethical task in coaching is a conscious handling of "the antinomy of functionality and personality" (IOBC 2019, p. 57), referring to the client himself as well as to his employees. In general, it is part of the ethical responsibility to base decisions on the most comprehensive view of mankind possible, so that the individual persons can experience themselves not only as recipients of instructions but also as dialogical partners. This is a prerequisite for motivation, creativity, identification with their company and thus also for the stability and health of the employees. Schreyögg (2012, p. 163 ff.) discusses in detail the "anthropological premises" as requirements for a well-founded coaching concept and suggests four subject areas: individual freedom of action, sociality, lifelong development and work as a factor of identity development. This intention is

also pursued by the IOBC Code of Ethics (2019, p. 55 ff.), which describes general anthropological principles (e.g. dignity of the person, dialogue, openness to development, freedom of will ...), from which maxims for practical application in coaching are derived.

Narrowed Responsibility Horizon: Effects of Action

The horizon of responsibility grows with the scope of the means—this principle seems quite demanding in view of the global interactions in politics and economy. It evokes associations with the mythical figure of Atlas, who carries the entire globe on his shoulders. Kant's categorical imperative: "Act in such a way that the maxim of your will can at any time be simultaneously valid as the principle of general legislation" ultimately boils down to the same thing, as does the statement of Lévinas (1983) when he speaks of the I as the bearer of the universe: "Here solidarity is responsibility, as if the whole edifice of creation rested on my shoulders". This means that every action can have potentially infinite consequences.

Buer emphasizes that this responsibility, which "tends to be infinite" (2008, p. 152), can only be a partial responsibility. We therefore need to manage the paradox between the basically infinite responsibility due to global interdependencies and a limited responsibility for the direct effects of our actions. Nevertheless, the *ecological imperative,* as formulated by the philosopher Hans Jonas can be taken as orientation for this horizon of responsibility: "*Act in such a way that the effects of your actions are compatible with the permanence of real human life on earth*" (Jonas, 1979, p. 36).

How can this be pragmatically grasped in coaching? The starting point for ethical questions can be an all too narrow horizon of responsibility, e.g. if a manager feels exclusively responsible for maximizing the profit of his company and for the satisfaction of the shareholders. The horizon of responsibility can be extended at least to consider the involving of other stakeholders. In this case, it is at least no longer irrelevant if a product sold in faraway countries contains carcinogenic substances or if products are purchased from Third World countries that have been manufactured under inhumane conditions. Today, such interrelations are widely discussed (Dietzfelbinger, 2008, p. 249 ff.) and also materialized, e.g. fair trade organizations; corporate social responsibility movements (see, for example, the EU Sustainability Directive, 2014).

Conflicts of Values, Ethical Dilemmas

Another area for ethical issues in coaching becomes apparent when different values stand against each other. With such conflicts of values, a client can arrive at dilemmas of action which can be very stressful and paralyzing for him if he cannot

come to a decision in his responsibility for conflicting demands (see the case example above). Coaching is a place to openly discuss such dilemmas and to develop criteria for responsible options for action. Ethical competence means being able to move in the field of tension between opposites in order to cope with the particular situation in its particularities. This is not a relativism of arbitrariness as long as the reference to overarching values (e.g. general human rights) is maintained. To find the good measure ("virtue" is according to Aristotle the middle measure between the extremes) is easier with an ethics of responsibility than with a traditional ethics of duties; because the autonomous assessment of a conflict situation or a dilemma requires a freedom that goes beyond the fulfilment of a catalogue of duties.

The following quite everyday examples of opposites that organizational members may have to deal with can also appear as conflict issues in coaching (cf. Buer, 2008):

- Responsibility for the interests of my organization versus responsibility for the interests of the customers,
- Responsibility for my specific task versus responsibility for the entire organization,
- Responsibility for my work role versus responsibility as a person who is committed to his own conscience,
- Responsibility for good external performance versus responsibility for personal integrity.

Supporting Forums for Ethical Reflection

Ethical questions need forums in which they can be discussed and possible answers developed. For coaches, this can already be practiced in training groups; for professional everyday life, supervision or intervision groups are recommended (see chapter "Supervision of Coaching"). Professional self-reflection also requires an open approach to mistakes or failures. For this, however, suitable framework conditions are necessary in which feelings of shame, i.e. a threat to self-esteem, are not encouraged but relieved, because shame often prevents an open approach to alleged or actual mistakes.

Open Questions

Apart from the fact that the question of the ethical foundations for a successful life will always remain open, one specific aspect should be mentioned: Can ethical action be considered from the point of view of usefulness, as utilitarianism does? Dietzfelbinger argues: "Business ethics, ethically desirable behaviour in the company is not free of charge" (Dietzfelbinger, 2008, p. 88), but "the investment (...) will be amortized in the medium term—and that measurably" (ibid., p. 91). Certainly it

cannot be called moral if an organization uses a code of ethics without corresponding convictions and actions only from a strategic point of view (e.g. as marketing, image cultivation, as relief from a guilty conscience, as *greenwashing*), because this would be "false labelling" (ibid.), i.e. fraud.

Behind the above question, perhaps it is again the polarity mentioned between an *ethics of aspiration (eudaemonism)* and an *ethics of duty (deontology)*: The latter seems to imply that the morally good must be completely free of self-interest. But if we understand all ethics as the effort to enable a successful life for each individual in his or her mutual relations to others in narrower and wider horizons, considerations of usefulness need not be excluded. The ultimate yardstick for this is the responsibility for the permanence of life on the global horizon—for the benefit of all of us and of future generations.

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Family Businesses in Coaching: Specific Dynamics

A. v. Schlippe

Preliminary Remarks

In this chapter, family businesses are understood to be companies that are wholly or partially owned by a family (Litz, 1995). More important than the size of the shareholding or the size of the company is the question of whether the family exerts a discernible influence on the business activities of the company, i.e., whether members are represented in the management or in supervisory bodies (such as advisory board, family council, and supervisory board). In addition, there has to be a transgenerational element, i.e., several generations must be involved (Simon et al., 2005).

Family businesses are a special type of "hybrid" organizations (Whetten et al., 2014): different closely related social systems reproduce themselves as communication systems based on very different functional logics. Usually, the *three-circle model* is taken as a starting point, which distinguishes between *family, company, and shareholder circle*. The subtleties of this discussion would lead too far here (for a more detailed discussion see Schlippe & Frank, 2013). For pragmatic reasons, this chapter focuses on the difference between family and business. This difference gives rise to special features that appear as resources and competitive advantage or as a burden, often even as a threat to the company (the so called "familiness," see Weismeier-Sammer et al., 2013). These elementary aspects will only be briefly discussed here. The chapter focuses on the question of the consequences for coaching.

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Specific Dynamics in Family Businesses

The case study: Paul and Josie, an entrepreneur couple, ask for support. They jointly own and manage a small company with 12 employees. Again and again there are violent arguments between the two of them in the company, which usually end in an angry break-up without any result (*"One cannot talk to you!"*). The incidents are very embarrassing for both of them, especially since they cannot be hidden from the employees. But they do not manage to get a grip on themselves. In coaching, starting from the difficulty of separating family (here: couple relationship) and business logics, we consider how they can better differentiate the worlds of the two social systems. It quickly becomes clear that *family communication* spills over into the corporate context here. Usually, *context markers* (Bateson, 1972) help to differentiate between different system logics: You act differently being at home compared to a restaurant or workplace as these contexts are clearly marked. In business families the context markers are frequently blurred: so, the couple talked about the company in the living room, and they argued like a couple at work. Simple rules of communication ("Come on, honey, now we're getting to the couple level, let's discuss this later!") are of little help because first: both get drawn into escalation very fast and found it difficult to control themselves. And second: they could not imagine speaking out a commentary like this loudly because of the proximity to the employees, both feared a loss of face here. Finally, they were enthusiastic about the following idea: Both would place a small red pin behind the lapel of the jacket. When one of them noticed that the communication was beginning to shift to the couple level, they would casually pull out the pin and place it to the front of the jacket as a signal to the other (an artificial context marker, so to say); nobody else would take notice of this small gesture.

In fact, the effect was somewhat different than expected: one started laughing as soon as the other put the hand on the lapel. The pattern of disputes dissolved. Of course, it was necessary to work on the disputed issues additionally, so the couple decided to start a couples' therapy. But the pins helped them to better differentiate the *family* and *company* contexts. The example shows that, in a way, family and business "simply do not fit together" (Schlippe, 2014, p. 23). This has to do with the fact that two communication systems reproduce themselves by different, often even contradicting logics (Schlippe et al., 2020):

- Communication in families is organized around the topic of *tight personal relationship* and *belonging* (even if one is perhaps constantly arguing about it, the question of relatedness, or lack thereof, is central). Communications are often redundant and serve primarily to reproduce connectedness—think of the many gestures of relationship that families exchange. Of course, decisions are also made in families, but in a very different way from those in companies, namely in each case taking into account the importance of a decision for family relationships, the person takes precedence over the function.
- Companies, on the other hand, are built around (rational) *decisions*. The theory of social systems understands organizations even as *consisting* of decision

communications (Luhmann, 2000): any communication will be checked if it contributes directly or indirectly to a decision. Here, the required functions have priority over the individual person, they are only important for the company in their functionality.

A simple example of the contradiction in a case of succession: The statement of father or mother that the operative management will now be assigned to an external manager after all, moves (at least formally) in entrepreneurial decision logic. But it is often understood in the logic of attachment: *How can you do this to me (or your child)!*

In formal terms, the theoretical figure of the *pragmatic paradox* (Watzlawick et al., 1967) can be used for many of the situations of the entrepreneurial family (Schuman et al., 2010). The prerequisite for this is the simultaneous coincidence of *incompatible behavioral expectations*. A classic example is a woman who complains that her husband never brings her flowers—only to say the next day when he stands in front of her with the bouquet: "*You only bought them because I told you to! But you didn't act out of your own intention!*" In her complaint, two expectations are communicated simultaneously: *Do what I wish!* And *do it willingly!* Together they cannot be fulfilled. Human everyday life is pervaded by such paradoxical constellations (Simon, 2002). People usually move in many contexts (and the associated behavioral expectations) at the same time and they always unconsciously control how they behave in these mixed situations (Kriz, 2011, p. 103). Usually, the already mentioned *context markers* help to find one's way intuitively: There are usually enough clues to help you know what logic (school, train, family, conference, etc.) you are following, what the rules of the communication are, and what behavioral expectations are active there. The implicitness in which we adequately decipher the behavioral expectations placed on us in the most diverse contexts so easily causes us to simply overlook what a great human achievement the ability to move predictably in complex social structures actually is.

In family businesses, however, it is particularly difficult to distinguish between the different contexts. Again and again, the participants are exposed to behavioral expectations that result from the simultaneous presence of (relationship-oriented) family and (fact- and decision-oriented) corporate logic. The contexts of *family* and *company* are not always clearly separable. At Sunday breakfast, you may find yourself in a strategy discussion—and a story shared by a successor when, in the middle of an advisory board meeting, her father handed her his glasses with the words "*Clean them!*", shows that also the context of the *advisory council* did not help to properly differentiate between the two logics. The paradoxical demand is that one should follow one and the other logic at the same time (Litz, 2012; Schlippe et al., 2020). This situation is particularly explosive because it involves areas where intense emotions are at play: It is often about enormous values, about the life's work or its (lack of) recognition, about identity, about appreciation, about loyalty and betrayal, about experienced promises and their breaking, about jealousy and experienced privations that push for compensation, etc.; in short: *fertile environs* for conflicts (Grossmann & Schlippe, 2015; Schlippe & Frank, 2017).

Coaching in the Context of Family Businesses

At this point, only those coaching occasions will be dealt with whose cause can be traced back to the paradoxical constellations described, i.e., directly or indirectly to the difference between the logic of *tight personal relationship* and the logic of *decision-making*. For many other issues where family businesses do not differ significantly from other companies in terms of business management, personnel planning, change management, etc., the whole range of possible interventions that are available in coaching can be used (see Greif, 2008; Megginson & Clutterbuck, 2005; Schmidt-Lellek & Schreyögg, 2008; see also the chapter on leadership coaching, top management, change management in this handbook).

De-dramatizing and Dissolving Personal Attributions

Of course, not every family business is burdened, not every interaction is paradoxical, but there are many more starting points for conflicts. A first step in coaching can therefore be to take out the drama: "It is no wonder that you have problems. This is the expected normal case. It would be rather astonishing and in need of explanation if you had *no* conflicts!" In family businesses, conflicts are probably more the rule than the exception. But the fact that those involved are highly excited and hurt is not something that only happens to them. One shares this experience with many other business families. Instead of getting stuck in anger, we can begin to decipher together how much of the drama and injury is to be understood structurally. The parties tend to personally attribute each other's attempts to come to terms with the paradoxes: He′s *stupid, sick or evil!* But the dynamics of social systems should not be attributed to the characteristics of individuals: A social system is something different than the sum of the experience and behavior of the people involved. Whenever this complexity is explained by recourse to single persons, dangerous simplifications are made: Insinuations of motives (*You only do that because. . .!*) or the attribution of causes of conflict to individual persons (*All your fault!*) are psychologically understandable, but they lead straight to escalation. From a systems theory perspective, the personal attribution of conflict causes is therefore probably not the best idea (Schlippe & Frank, 2017). If one succeeds in making the actors feel challenged by the difficult constellation ("the paradox is the enemy, not the brother or cousin"), an important step has been taken. This is harder done than written: Feelings of offending and corresponding outrage at the other person often run deep and take time to be looked at.

Clarifying the Systems: The Chair Exercise

It has already been described above how the simultaneity of incompatible logics of systems that cannot be differentiated by clear context markers can lead to paradoxes. A fairly simple but often resounding method in conflict coaching is to *artificially* introduce the missing context markers: Irrespective of whether the context is a single or multi-person context, situations can be analyzed by assigning them to different *chairs*, for example, each marked as *family logic*, *corporate logic*, or *shareholder logic*.

An example (Schlippe, 2018): A massive conflict had developed between father and son over the handover of a family-run hotel. In a very emotional scene (Christmas), the parents had offered their son to take over the management of the company. However, they reacted extremely outraged when four weeks later he presented them with a well-calculated business plan in which he proposed a strategic repositioning of the hotel. When the father was asked which *chair* he had been sitting in when he had made the offer, he replied without hesitation that it had been the *father's chair*. The son also clearly named the *successor chair* for this scene. In the scene, the two opponents now were each sitting opposite an empty chair, for the *son's chair* opposite the *father's chair* was just as empty as the *entrepreneur's chair* was opposite the *successor's chair*. Father's statement: *We want to entrust you with our jewel!* went to a *communication address* which the father associated with a specific "*bundle of expectations*" (Luhmann, 2008) that were heavily disappointed. And so was the son's offer of the business plan. Experiencing this on the two chairs made them be aware that neither of them was *stupid, sick, or evil*, but simply communicated in a different logic, and the communication got lost. The chairs clearly marked the differing contexts and thus had a *de-paradoxing* effect. In a similar way, an analysis of communicative confusion can also be produced in individual coaching. Also here the scene can be reconstructed over different chairs, an intervention that will be vividly remembered.

Conflicts and Psychological Contracts

The topic of *justice* is often seen as the key to understanding difficult conflict situations. It is possible that every conflict is based on the experience of injustice experienced (Montada, 2003; for family business contexts see Samara & Paul, 2019) and is often related to the violation of a *psychological contract* (Hülsbeck & Schlippe, 2018; Kickul & Lester, 2001). In general, this concept describes implicit agreements that are kept unclear, which are later recalled by the different parties in very different ways. Thus, a vaguely promised promotion might not take place despite the employee's efforts—their extra performance is gladly *accepted*, but the compensation they were aiming for is denied. A (felt) *broken promise* is an enormous driver of indignation and subsequent escalation.

The concept helps to understand conflict situations in family businesses too. Because it is precisely this type of company that plays with the rather soft logic of personal relationship and belonging (*One day, dear child, all this may be yours*. . .), in which one gets involved in a lot of things with trust in the other person. A sudden transfer to business decision logic (*No, your memory is wrong, I never said this!*) can bring a rude awakening. A successor may then find themselves in the *Successor's trap* (Kaye, 1996)—the realization that there is no future in the company for them, and this after perhaps even giving up their favorite studies and rejecting alternative career paths due to the unclear agreements of a psychological contract. Significant scenarios that were experienced as such psychological contracts can be discussed and reconstructed, if necessary, initially in individual interviews.

Succession Issues in Coaching

Succession conflicts are at the top of the list of danger points for family businesses. Well, we do not talk about the huge companies here with many shareholders and usually external management. Rather, in coaching, one will meet smaller companies where a founder or long-term patriarch is about to let go. In these families, the relationship between transferor and transferee has often been precarious for years. The result of many years of observing the junior for their possible suitability is often a certain cramping of the relationship, especially if, which is not uncommon, the junior does not quite meet the senior's expectations. This relationship can intensify into conflicts and lead to a constellation of mutual accusations: *You won't let go! You won't let me come up, how can I get leadership if you won't give me a chance?—You are not (yet) competent! How can I let go when I keep seeing you fail?* It is like a kind of shared "rap": *you don't let go!—You are not competent!* Between senior and junior it can take a long and torturous form, with both parking their own unconscious fears with the other in the sense of a *collusion* (Willi, 1984)*:* The senior does not have to deal with their own finiteness and the fear of the last stage of life as long as the successor does not show themselves to be competent, so they may even need them just a little bit the way they are. This may lead into a vicious dynamic: "When founder-entrepreneurs do eventually manage to select their successors, they often in a kind of unconscious conspiracy, choose people who are bound to fail. . . Many entrepreneurs do not, in their heart of hearts, really want their successor to succeed. They want to see successors fail to prove that they themselves are indispensable" (Kets de Vries, 1996, p. 66). The successor, on the other hand, can *delegate* their own fears of failure to the person handing over: *If only they'd let me, I could.* . .*!* (for details see Schlippe, 2012). Here it is advisable to first define both parties as *victims of* the particular constellation and absolve them from individual *guilt* for the misery, and then to clarify a number of critical questions in detailed individual discussions (two coaches are of course ideal here).

Questions to the Senior

The first question is whether they are actually ready to let go of the life's work. The confrontation with your own finiteness can be quite painful. Only when one has faced this *pain* does the question make sense whether one has the *courage* to accept the succession. It leads once again into another area: In the succession process, an entrepreneur gets involved in an activity with which they have no experience: letting go, without being able to control the consequences themselves. This can confront feelings of helplessness and self-depreciation. Experience has shown that these are very difficult for an entrepreneur to bear, which is why the position of strength is quickly sought again.

Therefore, it seems important to help the incumbent to deal with their own ambiguity by spending some time on both questions. It is about the question of what possibilities (other than playing golf) are seen to create a meaningful life also in old age—possibly an indication for a comprehensive life coaching (Schmidt-Lellek & Buer, 2011) or for a reassessment of marital expectations. Obviously, this process of personal clarification should include neither the family nor the potential successor.

When the feelings of pain and fear have been considered, the question of the extent to which one entrusts the junior with the task of managing the company can be answered unclouded by one's own emotionality. For the question of competence is of course essential and should be dealt with according to verifiable criteria wherever possible. In conclusion, the last question is to what extent the senior is confident enough to enter into a process with the junior, which, even if the emotional side has been clarified, still involves so many imponderables that it cannot be gone without mutual trust.

Questions to the Junior

Similar questions can be asked by the junior themselves before they are negotiated together. First of all, it is about the *will* to take responsibility, closely linked to the *courage* to take such a step. The statement of a young successor in coaching that for him a failure of the succession would be "even worse than running over a child" is an impressive reminder of how great the pressure of responsibility often is. Here, too, it can be good to linger on these questions before asking self-critically whether you actually consider yourself to be sufficiently qualified in terms of training and experience to present yourself to the senior with conviction as a successor. If the question as to whether one can engage in a succession process with the predecessor in a trusting and respectful manner is answered positively on this page, the ground is prepared for the planning of the subsequent steps. As long as these questions remain unanswered both always have a "joker" to avoid confronting their own emotions*: "It's you! You don't let go, so I can't get into the leadership position!"—"No, it's you! You aren't competent enough, so I can't let go!"*

The Expectation Carousel: Coaching of Managers and Company Successors

People who work in leadership contexts are usually confronted with complex constellations of expectations, wishes, and hopes for themselves, which they usually balance intuitively. However, the tangle of sometimes conflicting expectations can certainly be a burden. In addition to leadership situations, this also applies to succession: the junior is confronted with a wealth of different expectations and develops a *meta-perspective* on these: assumptions about what is expected of them (Schlippe & Jansen, 2020). Interestingly, it is not so much how this network *looks like* that matters in the perception of one's own ability to act, but rather how it is *experienced:* "Expectation must become reflexive; it must be able to relate to itself, . . . so that it knows that it is anticipated as anticipating. . . Ego must be able to anticipate what alter anticipates of him" (Luhmann, 1995, p. 303). It is possible to clarify these *"expectation-expectations"* by dealing with them in individual coaching and positioning oneself in relation to them.

In concrete terms, the expectation carousel is implemented as shown in Fig. 1.

The expectation carousel of a company successor

- The client (successor, manager) sits down in the middle of the room and writes the names of the people whose expectations are important to them on a piece of paper that they distribute around them. The coach supports with questions. People who have already passed away can also be *invited* (e.g., the founder who is looking down severely from a painting in the entrance hall), as also they can be a strong source of expectations felt by the client.
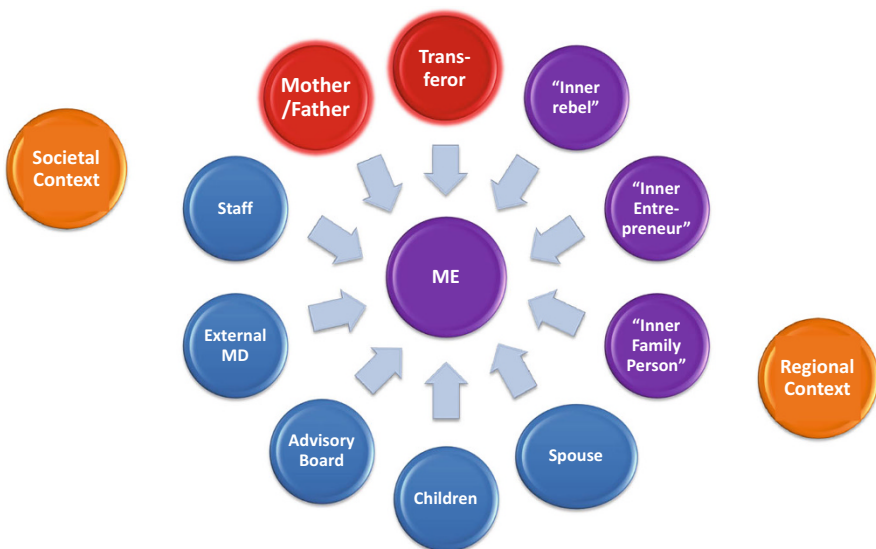
Fig. 1 The expectation carousel of a successor

- In the next step, the coach asks which *inner figures* could help to understand the field of expectations more concretely. This step deals with the internalized expectations that a person has toward themselves. Here, interesting facets may arise, sometimes encoded in symbolic terms (*my internal rebel* or *my internal Caesar*, but also *my anger*, *my love of life*, etc.). It is precisely these that may become interesting in the further course of the project.
- Starting from a *feeling of blockage* (tension in the stomach or chest, load on the shoulders, etc.), the client looks at what the *"hit list" of the load* looks like, that is the real *carousel*: Client looks around him (maybe on a chair on wheels) and feels where the body feeling is particularly massive. Usually, two to four outer and two to three inner *expectants* can be named on which to focus.
- Now the notes of these figures are placed one after the other on a chair opposite the client's chair in the middle. The client identifies with the other person (or inner part) sitting on this other chair and *lends* the figure their own voice (an identification in the sense of the Gestalt therapeutic technique of the *empty chair*). Coach and client develop a concise formulation of the assumed expectation of this other. So, the *Inner Rebel* may say: *Throw it at their feet!* or similar. The coach writes the sentence down on the paper that stands for that figure.
- Once the most important requirements have been worked through, it is back to their own chair. The client now from their seat starts to position themselves successively opposite the individual positions with the help of the coach, who may repeat the expectation aloud. Every expectation can now be *accepted, rejected,* or *modified* by the client. While an acceptance is usually unproblematic, a refusal would mean the end of the cooperation. This may well be an existential confrontation: *No, Dad, I made up my mind and I will not go into the position of the successor!* However, in many cases it is decided to go the middle way by positioning oneself toward the expectation by making an offer.

  This mode is crucial for the internal expectations, as they cannot be just dismissed. Here, work can be done to convey appreciation. Even a difficult inner voice will have contributed (or intended to do so) for some good in the client's life. This can be followed by an examination of inner parts as practiced in the work with the *inner family* (Schwartz & Sweezy, 2020). This can be a key to understanding your own blockages and regaining the ability to move. Peter, a company successor once found his *inner Goethe*, a very strict and hard inner client, who told him with the—here not at all positively experienced—classical words: *What you inherit from your fathers, acquire it to own it!* made life difficult. At the suggestion of the adviser, he began an exchange of letters with *Goethe*, to whom he naturally had to *lend* his *hand* for the sometimes long letters of reply. To his great surprise, his relationship with *Goethe* improved dramatically through this form of self-examination alone.
- Such a process is often experienced as clarifying. Not infrequently, a lost capacity to act is regained and a more concise positioning in one's own everyday life becomes possible.

External Management

Coaching in the context of family businesses can also affect work with managers outside the family. Many of the problems have to do with idiosyncrasies that can only arise here and which contradict the classic categories of career, competition, and profit orientation:

(a) *Never the No. 1*

The easiest way to explain this aspect is to use the picture from the presentation of an external CEO. This was shown on his license plate: the number 2 was shown next to the letter abbreviation for the company, which all company cars carried. It was clear to him that he would never become number one. To accept this would guarantee peace, otherwise, he would probably lose in the long run. What is at stake here is a basic attitude of complementarity toward the family.

(b) *Nonmonetary objectives*

Another aspect that external managers should be aware of has to do with the fact that achieving profit for family businesses is often not the top priority. Rather, the issue here is more comprehensively about *socio-emotional wealth* (Berrone et al., 2012), i.e., the preservation of one's own good name, for whose sake the family is prepared to make greater sacrifices (e.g., not closing loss-making branches in rural areas, and not giving up locations). Those who do not take this aspect into account may also risk a continuous negative voltage which in the end tends to be negative for the external party.

Concluding Remarks

Family businesses are a special context for coaching. The tension between the logic of commitment and decision-making, which can never be completely resolved, often makes this form of enterprise appear irrational. However, if one becomes aware of the resources hidden in this tension, one can learn to use them constructively together with the person seeking advice to optimize the respective work contexts. To date, there are only a few theoretically viable models that are explicitly designed for family businesses and from which a consulting methodology could be derived. The question of which specific approaches to coaching can be developed that are useful for people working in family businesses and/or also for members of entrepreneurial families remains an exciting challenge.

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Feedback for Performance Development: A Review of Current Trends

Marie-Hélène Budworth and Sheryl Chummar

Case Study

Richard has been working as Assistant Director of Marketing for a large telecommunications firm for 7 years. His manager, Anna, believes that he would make a great director if he could just polish his project management skills. He is excellent at setting up project timelines and delegating responsibilities but sometimes loses steam toward the end of the execution phase. Anna has been giving him feedback on this concern for the past three performance cycles. Despite the fact that he has been reminded of this weakness for the past 3 years, the problem persists. The feedback is not working.

Research into performance management indicates that Richard might be part of the large proportion of cases where feedback does not result in behavioral change. As will be reviewed in this chapter, there might be ways in which the feedback can be made more effective. Specifically, it could be that regular, timely feedback is warranted. Similarly, feedback in conjunction with a coaching or a strength-based approach might provide Richard with the insights needed to improve his performance. Each of these techniques will be examined in turn in this chapter.

Feedback and Coaching

Feedback is an integral part of the coaching process. Coaching is often used as part of organizational development strategy as a potential way to improve employee and managerial learning, as well as employee-managerial relationships (Hagen, 2012).

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Feedback is a central element of coaching, as coaches provide feedback to their employees as a way to facilitate their development (Gregory et al., 2008; Gregory & Levy, 2012). Coaches also help individuals collect and interpret feedback, set goals and measure progress against goals (London, 2015). However, just as the provision of feedback inconsistently improves performance (Kluger & DeNisi, 1996; Luffarelli et al., 2015), there are inconsistent findings as to the effectiveness of coaching as a strategy for improving performance (Hagen, 2012; Hamlin et al., 2006). As such, there is a need for researchers and practitioners to understand the role of feedback in coaching, along with its associated benefits and challenges.

Research in the area of feedback and coaching has received specific attention over the last decade, as the popularity of coaching continues to grow at a significant rate. Although there are distinct differences between an employee and executive coaching, for the purpose of reviewing coaching and feedback more generally, we will include both in our discussion. Researchers have been keen to determine the key "ingredients" of effective coaching for performance development. One such 'ingredient' is the role of feedback orientation in building successful coaching relationships. For example, London and Smither (2002) suggested that an employee's feedback orientation would influence his or her receptivity to coaching. As summarized by Gregory and Levy (2012), feedback orientation is a relatively stable trait, and may include: "(1) liking feedback, (2) having a propensity for seeking feedback, (3) possessing an ability to process feedback mindfully, (4) being aware of others' perceptions of oneself, (5) believing in the value of feedback, and (6) feeling accountable to respond or act on feedback" (Gregory & Levy, 2012, p.88). Recent work by Gregory and Levy (2012) provides support for the proposed relationship between feedback orientation and coaching by empirically demonstrating that employee feedback orientation not only accounts for significant variance in the quality of the employee/manager coaching relationship but also positively influences coaching behaviors. Using a behavioral observation scale developed by Heslin et al. (2006), subordinates assessed their supervisors' coaching behaviors on three dimensions: inspiration, guidance, and facilitation. Specifically, Gregory and Levy (2012) found that, through improved relationship quality, feedback receptivity was positively related to coaching behaviors, such as encouraging subordinates to continuously develop and improve (inspiration dimension), providing constructive feedback regarding areas for improvement (guidance dimension), and acting as a sounding board for developing subordinates' ideas (facilitation dimension).

Over the past several years, significant theoretical development has been made in the area of coaching and feedback. This is a promising trend, since only a decade earlier, a review of the literature highlighted coaching as an area where theory was lacking (Joo, 2005). Recent conceptual work by Gregory et al. (2011) has demonstrated that feedback, as part of the coaching process, plays an instrumental role in motivating and directing employee behavior. These scholars suggest that "control theory" serves as a "natural fit as an organizing framework for the roles of goals and feedback in executive coaching" (Gregory et al., 2011, p. 26), and that feedback aids coaching in achieving its primary purpose which is to help employees achieve desired outcomes. In other words, coaches' feedback can help improve the

self-regulatory abilities of individuals, which in turn positively influence personal development and job performance. This research complements previous theoretical work that has posited the role of feedback in coaching (Gregory et al., 2008; Joo, 2005) and echoes similar work that has examined the importance of feedback for effective coaching (Ting & Riddle, 2006). However, the literature on feedback and coaching is not exhaustive, and there is certainly more work to be done in this domain. Specifically, Gregory et al. (2011) suggest that future theoretical work should explore the role of individual self-regulatory traits (e.g., goal orientation, feedback receptivity) and their effect on coaching outcomes. For example, future studies could examine whether employees who actively seek feedback from their coaches are more effective in achieving their goals. Additionally, there is an opportunity to study the influence of contextual factors such as feedback culture within an organization (i.e., the quality and frequency of coaching feedback) on goal pursuit and goal achievement.

Research on Feedback in Organizations

The most common mechanism for providing formal feedback in organizations is through traditional performance management systems, which utilize a conventional one-on-one supervisor assessment of employee performance (London, 2015). According to Baker (2010), the most common reasons traditional methods are used are convenience and simplicity. Research has demonstrated that feedback is important for employee development and performance, so organizations aim to implement at least a minimal amount of feedback and assessment. Furthermore, in the absence of a formal system, researchers have argued that developmental feedback can lack meaningfulness and, as such, using a formal system for feedback delivery can help assure that it is seen as more than rhetoric (Cardy, 2015). However, this traditional methodology for employee feedback delivery is limited by several constraints. For example, managers generally do not like giving feedback and employees do not often like receiving it (Ledford et al., 2016).

Researchers have found that, as part of a formal performance management system, both managers and employees view the provision of feedback as a "burdensome activity that is of little value" (Pulakos et al., 2015, p. 51). When feedback is limited to only one source, effectiveness is highly dependent on the skill and motivation of the supervisor as well as the existing relationship within this dyad. Additionally, as we have identified, managers and supervisors often feel uncomfortable addressing this central task (Cardy, 2015). Further, the traditional method for feedback delivery is limited by temporal constraints. Since traditional programs for providing feedback occur at set times throughout the year (in most cases annually or semi-annually), it is no surprise that employees find the information they receive to be subjective, untimely, and even unfair (Ledford et al., 2016). Although traditional feedback delivery methods may have suited organizations in the past, they are perceived as ill-equipped to keep up with the fast-paced world of organizations

today. As such, some have argued that these systems should be abolished (Coen & Jenkins, 2002).

Although organizations invest large amounts of resources into organizational programs aimed at improving employee development and performance, research has demonstrated that these interventions do not always yield positive outcomes. Meta-analytic findings demonstrate that, although generally effective, in more than one-third of studies feedback interventions actually had a negative impact on subsequent performance (Kluger & DeNisi, 1996). Two decades have passed since Kluger and DeNisi's (1996) seminal review. Since that time, researchers have sought to mitigate the challenges identified above and improve the effectiveness of feedback interventions. Below we will review three promising trends that aim to improve employee feedback delivery within organizations.

Ongoing Feedback and the Use of Technology

Organizations have begun adopting systems that incorporate ongoing feedback in order to address issues of timeliness (Ledford et al., 2016). In a report of 244 organizations using one or more cutting-edge performance management systems, almost every company (97%) reported using some method of ongoing feedback (Ledford et al., 2016). Increased feedback frequency has been suggested as an integral part of creating a positive feedback environment within organizations (Chawla et al., 2016; Levy & Williams, 2004). Ledford et al. (2016) posit that ongoing feedback helps create a positive feedback culture, which aids in the motivation and retention of employees. It also enables feedback to be timelier and more individually tailored (Kuvaas, 2011). For example, when used in conjunction with traditional performance appraisals, ongoing feedback has also been shown to increase the perceived helpfulness of conventional feedback meetings (Kuvaas, 2011). Moreover, the results of this study also demonstrated that formal performance feedback meetings do not compensate for low levels of regular day-to-day interaction between managers and employees.

Despite the promising positive results linked to ongoing feedback, some scholars are skeptical of the effectiveness of this approach. In their experimental study of the effect of feedback frequency, Lurie and Swaminathan (2009) found that receiving frequent feedback leads to an excessive focus on and systematic processing of recent information and a failure to adequately compare feedback across multiple time periods. In some circumstances, this excessive focus resulted in decreased levels of performance.

Providing ongoing feedback can also be viewed as a time-consuming, cumbersome activity. The availability of new technology allows organizations to facilitate timelier, ongoing feedback. According to Ledford and Lawler (2015), technology can support feedback delivery within organizations by simply improving process management. Electronic feedback systems allow for quicker, more streamlined processes and more accountability through compliance checks. Electronic systems

also allow for more frequent, dynamic reviews. In today's organizations, goals may need to change with greater frequency than traditional systems will allow. Employees can input and receive feedback on how they are performing throughout the year, not just at annual reviews (Ledford & Lawler, 2015). Electronic data is also advantageous to HR practitioners, since it provides for greater ease of analysis.

Technology has also influenced how organizations gather and facilitate multisource feedback. Automated systems have greatly increased the ease with which 360-degree feedback interventions are administered. As well, peer recognition using social media has emerged as a new multisource feedback tool. Scholars have suggested that crowd-sourced feedback is fundamentally different than conventional feedback systems because it permits almost any organizational member to comment on another, in real time (Ledford & Lawler, 2015; Mosley, 2013). The advantages of this type of feedback system are obvious. Not only does real-time feedback mitigate recency effects, but it also provides an ongoing record of employee contributions. In addition to using electronic technologies to administer feedback systems, organizations are using the technology to offer self-assessment, e-learning, online coaching, and career development workshops (London, 2015). Empirical research in this area is only just developing, and so the proposed positive effects are not yet evidence-based.

Multisource Feedback

Multisource feedback more generally is gaining attention both academically and practically. According to Nieminen et al. (2013), the popularity of multisource feedback as a development and evaluation tool has grown substantially over the past several years as organizations perceive that feedback from multiple sources is more valid than feedback from a supervisor alone, enhancing the robustness of the process overall (Campion et al., 2015). Numerous advantages of multisource feedback over single-source feedback interventions have been cited by researchers including its ability to provide and incorporate different rater perspectives (Campion et al., 2015; Hedge & Borman, 1995); contribute to enhanced self-awareness (Luthans & Peterson, 2003; Seifert et al., 2003); increase perceptions of organizational justice (Karkoulian et al., 2016); improve work relationships, and ultimately improve performance (Rai & Singh, 2013).

The 360-degree feedback process is a specific and widely adopted type of multisource feedback. This type of feedback intervention is typically used by organizations for developmental purposes and often precedes an executive coaching intervention. This systematic and comprehensive feedback system is often used to support the development of leadership skills (DeNisi & Kluger, 2000; Tang et al., 2013). According to Campion et al. (2014), almost 300 articles and books have been published on the topic of 360-degree feedback over the past three decades. This substantial body of knowledge has resulted in a broad understanding of the usefulness and effectiveness of this practice as both a development and evaluation tool.

Campion et al. (2015) suggest that, "although the primary purpose of 360-degree feedback interventions has been employee development, they are being used with increased frequency within performance management systems" (Campion et al., 2015, p. 86). These researchers argue that 360-degree feedback can improve a performance management system's ability to measure and motivate desired employee behaviors.

In terms of effectiveness, Smither et al. (2005) highlight meta-analytic results that demonstrate only very small performance gains for leaders utilizing multisource feedback interventions, suggesting that practitioners would be unwise to expect large performance improvements. As such, researchers have recently turned their attention to the study of combined interventions like supplementing multisource feedback with executive coaching (Nieminen et al., 2013).

Strength-Based Performance Feedback

The developmental initiatives discussed to this point, and most developmental processes in organizations, are based on a "deficit model" of performance where weakness is viewed as an opportunity (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Performance feedback provided within traditional programs is focused on weaknesses, and the receipt of feedback has been associated with negative affective responses (Fishbach et al., 2010; Ilies et al., 2007; Johnson & Connelly, 2014). Roberts et al. (2005) argue that focusing on deficit models diminishes a person's chances of making their greatest contribution. As a result, researchers have begun to explore strength-based feedback programs (Aguinis et al., 2012; Bouskila-Yam & Kluger, 2011; Budworth et al., 2015). It has been suggested by researchers that feedback is most beneficial when managers focus on strength-based approaches, which identify and emphasize employees' areas of positive behavior rising from their knowledge, skills, and abilities (Aguinis et al., 2012). As such, researchers have called for the development of a general 'strength-based' approach to feedback where supervisors would identify employee strengths, provide positive feedback, and re-design jobs to compensate for deficiencies in talent (Aguinis et al., 2012). Still, other researchers have developed specific feedback interventions.

Kluger and colleagues (Kluger & Nir, 2010) proposed a radical departure from traditional feedback interventions in that there is a focus on behavioral intentions rather than past performance. Their technique, namely the Feedforward Interview (FFI) is based on appreciative inquiry where the underlying principle is that a focus on one's strengths rather than one's weaknesses can lead to personal improvement (Bushe & Kassam, 2005; Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987). Feedforward differs from traditional feedback in that it has a future focus. Feedback, in contrast, is focused on experiences in the past and is generally deficit focused.

Kluger and Nir (2010) describe the FFI protocol as containing five key elements. In phase 1, the introduction, the interviewee is asked to think only of past positive experiences. In the second phase, the interviewee is asked to tell a story of a

particular time at work when he or she felt full of life and energized. The individual is then asked to identify the "peak" of the story in the third phase. In the fourth phase, the interviewer asks the individual to describe the conditions that surrounded this success. Finally, the feedforward question is asked: "Recall the conditions that allowed you to feel alive at work. Consider these conditions as road signs or a beacon that shows you how to flourish at work. To what extent are your current behaviors at work or your plans for the immediate future taking you closer to, or further away from, the conditions that allowed you to feel full of life at work?" Collectively, these five key elements function as intentional acts and are meant to marry positive thoughts with future performance (Lyubomirsky & Layous, 2013).

Research on the Feedforward Interview in organizational settings is in its early stages; however, empirical studies have found the Feedforward Interview increases performance-related outcomes. A field experiment by Budworth et al. (2015) found that the Feedforward Interview increased employee performance over and above the traditional feedback method in a performance appraisal.

The effectiveness of the Feedforward Interview has also recently been studied as part of a coaching session, with a particular focus on comparing the effects of the FFI on self-efficacy, mood, and goal attainment versus the use of traditional feedback coaching. Using a quasi-experimental field study, McDowall et al. (2014) compared the effects of FFI-based coaching with traditional feedback coaching and found that participants in the FFI condition experienced significant increases in self-efficacy and were also more likely to attain self-set goals than those who had participated in traditional feedback coaching. This study was limited by a short time frame (1 month), and so we recommend that researchers build on these findings by examining the long-term effects of the FFI technique in the workplace.

As a newly developed organizational intervention, research on the FFI technique is still in its nascent stages with plenty of opportunities to build and expand our theoretical understanding of its effects. Recent calls in the FFI literature have invited researchers to examine the conditions under which the intervention is most effective (Kluger & Nir, 2010). For example, boundary conditions such as personality differences, as well as contextual differences should be considered. Budworth et al. (2015) suggest exploring the mediating role of fairness perceptions, as well as the setting of specific high goals. Consistent with Kluger and Nir (2010), we acknowledge that not all individuals will experience the FFI in the same way, and not all individuals will experience an increase in performance. Thus, it is important to understand the characteristics of both the context and interviewee.

The Feedforward Interview has also been incorporated into a broader "Strength-Based Performance Appraisal" system which, as outlined in Bouskila-Yam and Kluger (2011), includes the following six tools and principles: Feedforward Interview, reflecting the best self, developing strengths, happiness research, 3: 1 ratio between positive and negative emotions, a win-win approach, and increasing collective efficacy. This research emphasizes the role of feedback in performance improvement and demonstrates that strength-based feedback interventions have the potential to make a difference in terms of employee performance. Strength-based feedback interventions also have the ability to contribute to the creation of a

strengths-based psychological climate, which have been positively linked to both employee positive affect and in-role and extra-role performance (van Woerkom & Meyers, 2015).

A focus on strength-based feedback interventions does not necessarily mean the elimination of providing negative feedback. Instead, researchers have suggested that focus be placed on how feedback is delivered. O'Malley and Gregory (2011) maintain that negative feedback is important, yet positive perspectives have a significant role in the delivery of negative feedback. Since negative feedback has been linked to negative emotions such as guilt and anger (Johnson & Connelly, 2014), O'Malley and Gregory (2011) recommend empirically based strategies for fostering positive emotions that can undo the negative emotions aroused by weakness-focused feedback.

Summary

In recent years, organizations have opted to use coaching to accompany other feedback programs, such as 360-degree feedback and/or traditional performance management systems. According to Chawla et al. (2016), coaching differs from these other feedback delivery methods because it is individual, open-ended, and developmental in nature. As such, coaching is seen to be an effective way to facilitate the interpretation of feedback (Luthans & Peterson, 2003). Studies have shown that feedback, when given in conjunction with a coach/facilitator, can have an increased positive impact on outcomes as compared to written feedback alone (Seifert et al., 2003). Coaching also enhances the interpretation and processing of feedback leading to the development of action plans and ultimately improved performance (Hooijberg & Lane, 2009). There is a great deal of promise for the application of coaching to feedback interventions.

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The Forms of Contact: An Approach to Theme, Process, State, and Methods in Coaching

Thomas Bachmann

Introduction: The Challenging Client: A Case Study

Al came to the coach to seek support during a restructuring of his department. He arrived punctually to the appointments, was dressed impeccably, and seemed well-groomed. In the first interview, he talked at length about his CV and the challenges he had overcome in his work life. While working out his concrete request for coaching, he repeatedly expressed doubts as to whether coaching was the right thing for him or not.

The coaching sessions with him all followed the same pattern: Al talked for a long time and hardly let himself be interrupted or guided by questions. When he was finished, he asked questions, but the answers did not really seem to interest him. He could hardly leave paraphrasing or comments from the coach unremarked or without his own "correction" or addition. In the coaching sessions he sought, above all, confirmation of his plans to restructure his department. In doing so, he acted in an almost Machiavellian manner by manipulating his employees and managers, but also the management. He launched information and played opponents off against each other. He spoke condescendingly about his colleagues and the company, occasionally with cynicism. If he was confronted by the coach in this regard, he hardly ever responded. On the other hand, he always stressed how important coaching and the coach's advice was to him. He was hardly able to communicate without evaluations, which mostly referred to whether what the coach said was helpful for him or not.

The communication was laborious. It was not possible to see what the client took away from the coaching or what Al actually expected. In spite of everything, the sessions went on in a pleasant atmosphere. The client was aware of his challenging

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communication style for the coach and tried to balance it, again and again, with humor.

This case study is about a challenging client. On one hand, the client's contact behavior is challenging because it complicates establishing a sustainable working alliance; on the other hand, the client's coaching themes are challenging and not clear and seems to have more to do with his specific personality traits than with opportunities for change within his social system. In order to understand clients with interaction styles like this, within the intra- and interpsychic dynamics of their coaching themes, and for deriving intervention strategies, the concept of *contact* from the Gestalt approach is described in detail in the following.

On Contact

Contact is the core concept in Gestalt therapy. Contact is a state as well as a process and a prerequisite as well as a result of the interaction of an organism with its environment. The founders of Gestalt therapy understand contact as the "the awareness of, and behavior toward, the assimilable novelty; and the rejection of the unassimilable novelty" (Perls et al., 1962, p. 230), e.g., something to eat, to know, to learn, to do, etc. Any organism needs contact for living and for its development. The assumption is that successful and complete contact processes cause satisfaction, fulfillment, excitement, and growth. Therefore, the contact concept was extended from the level of the organism, to the level of the psychic system and later to the group, team, and organization level (Nevis, 2013). Contact occurs at the contact boundary that distinguishes a system from its environment. The contact boundary is where the system's interaction patterns differ from the interaction in the environment and can be seen as "order from noise" in a complex world (Bertalanffy, 1968; Foerster, 2003). The contact boundary is where the exchange of physical energy and the environment takes place. In the Gestalt approach, the contact boundary occurs during the contact process and is also its prerequisite (Perls et al., 1962). The quality of the contact boundary impacts the intensity and the direction of the contact process.

The Cycle of Experience

The most common model to describe the process of contact is the *Cycle of experience* (Nevis, 2013). The model refers to the assumption that *Personality* is the sum of all experiences of an individual (see Fig. 1). The moment a *need* emerges as a result of the *Id function* the *Ego function* starts and controls the contact process and the acting *Self* occurs by differentiating the organism from the environment by building the contact boundary and a figure emerges from the ground (Perls et al., 1962). The
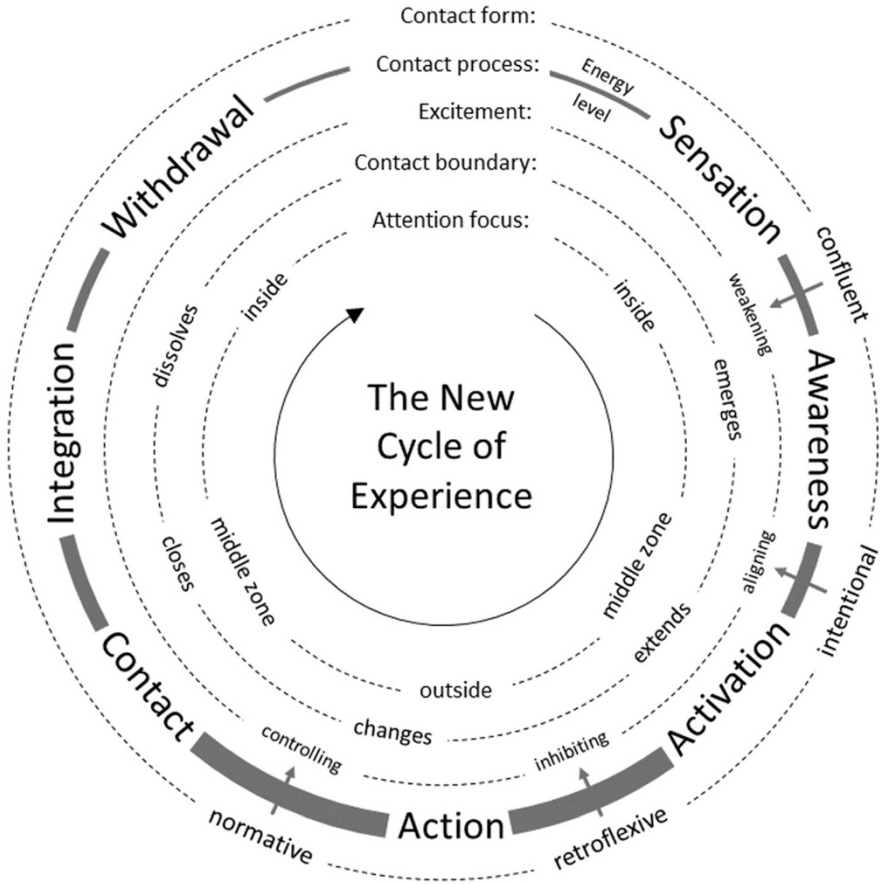
Fig. 1 The new cycle of experience

contact process can be characterized by the following phases and steps on all three system levels.

Phase 1: Pre-contact

1. *Sensation*: An unspecific sensation occurs caused by unfulfilled or wounded *needs*. The attention turns to internal processes and the current needs become more and more conscious.
2. *Awareness*: The unspecific sensation has turned into full awareness of the current needs and psychic energy rises. A figure has emerged from the ground and the contact boundary occurs. At this point, the contact function *confluency*, i.e., the *confluent* form controls the process and the upcoming psychic energy.

Phase 2: Contact

3. *Activation*: The attention turns to the external to find appropriate possibilities to fulfill the urging needs. The psychic energy increases considerably, and the system starts striving for goal attainment. This part of the process is controlled by the contact function *projection*, i.e., the *intentional* form.
4. *Action*: The activated energy urges to completion and causes action in form of movement toward the novelty where the needs can be fulfilled. For example, something to eat or drink, fresh air, rest, touch, etc. on the organismic level; new ideas, knowledge, a painting, music, a poem, etc. on the psychic level; and new shared thinking, elements of culture, new patterns of interaction on the social system level. At this point, *retroflection* controls the process.
5. *Contact*: The system and the novelty meet at the contact boundary and the assimilation of the novelty starts and is controlled until the end of Phase 3 by the contact function of *egotism*, i.e., the *normative* form. The attention turns back to the internal process.

Phase 3: Post-contact

6. *Integration*: During the process of assimilation the novelty becomes a part of the system. An experience is gained and becomes a part of the personality through integration. The psychic energy diminishes.
7. *Withdrawal*: The system releases from the contact, the figure dissipates.

The Forms of Contact

Full contact is not always possible or appropriate. Contrary to the claims of Perls et al. (1962) sometimes it is appropriate to avoid contact or to weaken or change the contact process. Therefore, the process can be controlled by the *contact functions* (Wheeler, 2013). The number of these functions differ from author to author. The most common functions are *confluence*, *introjection*, *projection*, *retroflection,* and *egotism*. Polster and Polster (1974) introduced *deflection* as an additional contact function. Bachmann (2019) extended this model by the assumption that the intensity and the quality of contact, i.e., the *forms of contact* are a function of the current needs, the introjects, the personality, and the environment, e.g., an interaction partner, a social context, or a specific situation.

Introjection (lat. "throwing in") is described by Perls et al. (1962) as the most original of all contact functions, from which all others arise. "Every contact disorder is based on an introjection" (Blankertz & Doubrawa, 2005, p. 165). Introjects are structural elements from the external. They are to be regarded as foreign bodies since they have not been consciously assimilated by the system through active contact, but passively and unconsciously adapted to the environment, e.g., the parents or the teacher. Introjects of psychic systems can be beliefs, parental drivers (Kahler, 1975), or external norms and values that significantly shape the contact behavior or make contact more difficult.

Confluence (lat. "flowing together") describes the state and the process in which a system establishes a weak contact boundary only. Therefore, the attention diffuses between inside and outside and the own needs can only vaguely be perceived. The system is desensitized, or parts of the self are split off (Wheeler, 2013). The needs of others are interpreted as one's own needs and the system strives to fulfill them. Confluence creates unison, harmony, and closeness, it does not allow conflicts to rise. Due to a weak contact boundary, the confluent system is not able to generate relevant impulses to send out. Therefore, it is considered by others not to be different from the patterns of the environment. The relevant difference is missing. Perls et al. (1962) describe confluence as a state of contactlessness. It provides only a weak basis for relationship. The confluence shows itself through the strive for harmony and affiliation. Courtesy and self-abandonment characterize the interaction. The main function of confluence is to weaken the excitement of need perception during the contact process and to turn the attention to the outside, to other's requests.

Projection (lat. "throwing out") means a shift of the contact boundary to the outside. The novelty is already assimilated in the imagination before the actual action takes place as described in the coaching theme in the introducing case study. In projections, needs and goals are expressed. They are connected with much psychic energy, i.e., with excitement and emotions. The projection has an important function in the formation of goals and ideas. What is missing in the perception of the field is replaced, supplemented, or imagined. Perception is also always a process of projection because we can only recognize what we know. Whereas, "learning means to discover that something is new," Perls (1969), i.e., to correct the projection. To sum up, the function of projection is to control the direction of the contact process, thereby it is dependent on the grade of confluency at the beginning of the cycle.

Retroflection (lat. "throwing backwards") as a contact function prevents activated energy from being directed as an action toward the novelty. If the action cannot take place, the activated energy and the attention remain inside and turn on the self (cf. Perls et al., 1962). Thereby, the contact boundary is closed to inhibit the excitement. For an observer, there are only a few actions or reactions of a retro-reflecting system to be seen. The action at the contact boundary does not take place. Restraint, holding on, and suppression of feelings can be observed. In our view, the *deflection*, introduced by Polster and Polster (1974) can be understood as a variety of retroflection, since basically the same processes take place. The only difference is that instead of the restraint an evasive action is shown. The main function of retroflection is to inhibit the psychic energy to avoid potential negative consequences of an action. The grade of retroflection is a direct result of the projections on the possible actions.

Egotism (Perls et al., 1962) is the fourth contact function and it is important in the last phase of the cycle of experience. As a result of the action, the "movement towards the novelty," the self must be changed in a process of integration. Existing knowledge, beliefs, experiences are provided with new components. In short "the old" must be destroyed and replaced by "the new." Thereby, the self must change. Egotism can be described as the contact function that protects the (possibly insecure)

self from too much change. This is expressed in the fact that impulses are assimilated but not integrated. In this way, egotism prevents the change — the surrender of the self (Wheeler, 2013) through behaviors of distancing, evaluating, and devaluing as well as correcting, supplementing, or controlling. The client's behavior toward the coach in the introducing case study is an example of this form of contact. The main function of egotism is to control the process of integration and to reject the unassimilable novelty. The grade of egotism is closely related to the previous action.

For the application of the contact concept to coaching and consulting, more neutral terms are suggested for the contact functions *projection* and *egotism*. With regard to the formation of goals, projection is replaced by the term *intentional form* and egotism by the term *normative form*. The terms *confluence* and *retroflection* are retained. At the same time, the observer's position when applying the concept of contact is to be emphasized by using the term *form* with the intention to focus on the obvious, i.e., the behavior and to give up the original more psychoanalytic perspective. In the following, we will therefore speak of the *confluent*, the *intentional*, the *retroflexive*, and the *normative* form of contact (Bachmann, 2019). This is also important to prevent the forms of contact from being understood as personality types or character styles. The forms of contact in a given situation show which kind of contact is possible and useful for an individual at this moment to fulfill its needs and to control its impulses of excitement with regard to the other, the social context, and the situation. Therefore, a certain form of contact is neither bad nor good but the possible behavior of an individual in a given situation. In a number of empirical studies, the forms of contact were investigated by the confirmatory factor analysis for self and external assessment (Bachmann, 2019), on different system levels (Bachmann, 2019; Lellinger & Bachmann, 2016, 2017) and in different situations, contexts and interaction systems (Bachmann, 2019, 2021).

Contact in Coaching

How can we apply the theory of contact to coaching? There are four important perspectives on the coaching process which can be observed through a "contact view":

1. The client's contact behavior.
2. The contact behavior of the coach.
3. The coaching relationship.
4. The role of contact behavior in the coaching theme of the client.

All four perspectives are interconnected, and it is this coinciding interconnectivity that is the main principle of action in Gestalt coaching. We suppose that the client's contact behavior in the coaching process is a blueprint of the contact behavior in their life outside of the coaching relationship, e.g., in the organizational context. During the coaching session, the client gets in contact with unfulfilled needs and with possibly unfinished experiences. This happens on the base of a trustful and

dialogic relationship (Buber, 2012) through fostering of the client's awareness in differentiating three zones of attention: the *inner zone* with internal processes of upcoming needs and emotions; the *middle zone* with thoughts, imaginations, and fantasies; and last but not least the *external zone*, the environment with all of its requirements, its diversity, and complexity. The interpersonal encounter, based on the underlying coaching relationship and the occasion to try experiments, can generate intense moments of contact which help to complete unfinished business and to get positive experiences in a secure coaching space. Those can be transferred to real life at this moment. Thereby, the coaching relationship, the place where the client experiences unconditional positive regard, empathetic understanding, and congruence, as Rogers (1965) pointed out, also allows the Gestalt coach to get involved in a true encounter. This means, establishing a dialog and a unique relationship that enables the coach to be in resonance with the client and to show his own experience in the process. Thus, the focus of change and learning lies more on the relationship and upcoming awareness than on the applied methods (Simon, 2009).

The Client Perspective

Each client shows a specific contact behavior in the coaching situation. As we pointed out, the chosen form of contact is the momentarily appropriate way an individual controls the interaction with the environment and thereby fulfills its needs and avoids harm. Especially in the first coaching session, where the coaching relationship must be established and the coaching engagement has to be clarified, the contact behavior of the client is often influenced by the organizational context and the role expectations toward the coach. In many situations, the person whom the coach meets in the first session is not a client yet, but somebody who is in an evaluating, holding back, overfriendly, or expectational mode. However, to establish a sustainable relationship real readiness to engage oneself is needed.

In the following, typical client problems are examined to illustrate the forms of contact for the client perspective:

The *confluent* form: The client is kind and affectionate, engaged, and eager to do everything well. He or she is open to advice and insights from the coach and seems to want to please the coach. In this case, the danger for the coach is to accept this unconscious invitation to a superior position in a role such as a consultant or a teacher rather than that of a coach. If this happens, no active contact in the relationship will be possible and the client will run into the danger of assimilating unproven suggestions or solutions, i.e., introjection could happen. This is in contradiction to the idea of coaching to enhance self-reflection, autonomy, and self-efficacy.

The *intentional* form: The client is active, energetic, and sometimes acts from a demanding stance. He or she has concrete thoughts and evaluations about others, the situation, and the coaching theme like the client in the case study. With these clients,

it could be difficult for the coach to generate the willingness to take other perspectives on the situation or openness for different interpretations and possible solutions. Very often, clients who show this form of contact are involved in conflicts on a higher level of escalation and try to use the coach to get support to resolve the conflict in their favor. The intentional form can put the coach in a dilemma of whether to serve the client and accept their construction of reality, or on the other hand, to speak up by providing feedback and possibly lose a customer.

The *retroflexive* form: The client seems to be shy, passive, and not very talkative. It is typical that he or she holds back on a lot of important matters and suppresses upcoming emotions and avoids talking about their feelings. There might be a lack of trust or they need more time to get familiar with the coaching situation. Those clients are a tough challenge. The more the coach tries to involve the client the more closed off they become. The trap with those clients could be that the coach becomes overactive and entertaining to fill the empty space of communication, but this will not lead to a sufficient contact because the contribution of the client is still missing in this game.

The *normative* form: We encounter a self-confident, articulate, and intelligent client, as introduced in the case study, who argues based on facts. His or her speech is often evaluative and he/she tends to tell others what is right and what is wrong. Coolness and perfectionism are important, and they avoid admitting faults or showing weakness. In the first encounter, they try to figure the coach out and tend to control the conversation. They make the coach feel incompetent and incapable of enough meaningful content. The trap with the normative form is that the coach tries to serve the client and to deliver what he or she is requesting, very often on a superficial rational level, whereas it is impossible to talk about feelings and emotions. This results in beating around the bush instead of any real contact.

The four examples from the client's perspective show that especially at the beginning of coaching processes the forms of contact play an important role for both the client and the coach. For the client, they have the function of contact regulation in a new and uncertain situation and for the coach, they deliver valuable insights into the client's situation and personality traits. The cycle of experience from Gestalt therapy, where the forms of contact are located at certain points of the contact process, can provide opportunities of intervention for the coach to deal with the different forms of contact behavior. Those possible interventions will be described in detail in the last section of this chapter.

The Coach Perspective

The forms of contact are also relevant when reflecting on the role of the coach. On the one hand, there are many external requirements implicated in the coach's role, especially if the coaching is sponsored by an organization. These external requirements may be general expectations of success, the hope for positive evaluations as a coach, the expectation to meet the client's needs and wishes, the expectation to

influence the client in a way corresponding to his or her boss' intentions, the hope to get the next coaching mandate, the expectation to do a good job from the perspective of the human resources function, et cetera. On the other hand, the coach may demonstrate personality traits caused by *introjections* like intrapsychic drivers (Kahler, 1975) or schemas (Young et al., 2003). In coaching typical drivers could be perfectionism, a tendency to narcissism, a need for acknowledgment, and the willingness to sacrifice or missionary behavior.

For the professional role as a coach, it is particularly important to reflect on external requirements and intrapsychic drivers and their impact on our contact behavior, especially in critical situations (Lellinger & Bachmann, 2016). For example, if we are under economic pressure and dependent on our clients, or we tend to please our clients, then *confluent* contact behavior is likely. The *intentional* form could be triggered if we follow strong hypotheses about our clients in the coaching process; if we want to be successful and try to generate problem solutions for the client; or if we follow a plan or a certain intention and fail to act neutrally, impartially, and restrained as the role of a coach demands. The opposite of this behavior is the *retroflexive* form. In a coaching setting this form of contact could become a problem if the coach does not dare to talk about his or her own feelings, sensations, emotions, impressions, or reflections concerning the client or the coaching theme. For example, when negative feelings arise in the coach, such as uncertainties and questions, but also frustration and boredom or ambiguity regarding the coaching process or the theme. In this case, it is important to discuss these elements in the coaching process and not to hold back. In short, retroflection could prevent working on a deeper, more emotional, and personal level and missing the chance for re-contracting the coaching engagement if necessary. Finally, if the coach acts with the *normative* form, the coaching process can turn into a distanced and rational event with no real personal involvement. The risk of this contact form is that a dialog can turn into a discussion, a hypothesis into a belief, and an encounter into a teaching hour. The coaching process changes from a process-oriented encounter into an expert consulting mandate.

In summary, it can be stated that the professional role as coach and the contact behavior in a specific coaching situation are closely related. For this reason, it is important to reflect on one's own contact behavior and the underlying external requirements and intrapsychic drivers. To do so, it is essential to ask for feedback from clients, customers, and colleagues. Supervision sessions with a professional coach or attending intervision groups with peers can also be helpful to ponder over your own contact behavior.

The Coaching Relationship Perspective

The form of contact we choose in a certain situation is always a response to the contact form of the other. There are typical patterns of symmetric or complementary interaction in relationships described by Bateson (2000).

A *symmetric* interaction occurs when a certain behavior of an individual causes a similar behavior by the other and vice versa, and both act with the same underlying intention. For example, a coach and a client become *confluent* with each other during the coaching process by talking more and more about their problems from a parent's perspective on raising children. A feeling of understanding and affiliation between coach and client occurs but the professional relationship degrades and may lose its power. Another example is described in the introductory case study. A client's challenging *normative* contact behavior could trigger the coach to act in a symmetric manner. If so, a competitive situation can occur where the coach and client race against each other for facts, truth, and control which prevents building a trusting relationship.

A *complementary* interaction is when both parties show different behavior caused by different underlying needs in such a way that the needs complement each other and also the behaviors. For example, the client acts in the *normative* form, and the coach responds with *confluency*. A client from the c-level of an organization whose behavior is critical, efficiency-oriented, and rational causes a feeling of uncertainty and rejection in the coach which possibly leads to confluent behavior (see case study). Another example could be the *intentional* form on the side of the coach which causes a *retroflexive* behavior on the side of the client. This can occur when the coach's behavior is too active and demanding, whereas the client, sent to the coach by his or her boss, has not developed trust yet. Another example could be a coaching situation where the client is involved in a serious conflict. Instead of trying to change the client's perspective and helping him or her to look at the conflict from the perspective of the other party, in order to find a solution, the coach acts in a biased way by supporting the client's thinking and therefore amplifies the conflict. In this case coach and client share a *complementary* pattern regarding the conflict situation.

Many other constellations of symmetric or complementary behavior based on the contact forms are possible. The following list, adapted from Bachmann (2018), shows criteria for the investigation of the interactions in the coaching process and could be helpful to establish and cultivate the coaching relationship with the aim of successful contact.

1. *Clarity about the other*

Do I have a clear feeling about what my client needs and thinks? Do we meet at the contact boundary? This means the other is involved in the joint process and recognizable in his or her entirety. Missing or weak contact is characterized by the dominance of one of the contact functions in the relationship.

2. *Secure communication*

Uncertainty within the relationship means that no sustainable and trustful communication patterns have formed over the course of the interactions. This can be caused by dominating symmetric or complementary contact forms as described earlier. How the other person will react, what is possible and what is not, what the other expects, etc. has not yet emerged with a sufficient degree of stability. This leads

to a mode of interaction where the partners feel insecure and act tentatively, which therefore means that they are unable to involve themselves naturally in the coaching process with confidence and certainty.

3. *Our own relationship*

"The between" (Buber, 2012) as part of the dialog between the coach and client is the "space" in which learning and change are made possible. If this space, i.e., the type of interactive relationships, shows similarities with other relationship patterns already known to the client, such as, boss-employee, client-supplier, teacher-student, father-son, etc., this can be seen as a difficulty for the coaching relationship (see the Chapter by A. Schreyoegg in this book).

4. *Our own space*

An intensive encounter with plenty of contacts is characterized by the presence and focus by all parties, resulting in "field quality" (Staemmler, 2009). Far from disruptions, external and internal distractions, a "dense" atmosphere of discussion arises through the involved parties that allow the "outside world" to be blocked out.

5. *Addressing the needs*

The nature of co-creation means that all parties involve themselves in the communication process, thereby contributing to the shaping of the relationship. The fulfillment of needs is a fundamental component of what motivates people to involve themselves in a relationship, to shape and develop it, and should thus exist to an equal extent for both client and coach.

6. *My role, your role*

The distribution of roles arises at the beginning of the coaching based on prior information or experiences from similar contexts on the part of the client and is actively shaped during the process on the part of the coach. However, a distribution of roles that facilitates and is effective for coaching can only be formed through interactions over time. This process needs to be observed and managed.

7. *The encounter*

A true and comprehensive encounter needs more than spoken words. Do we show each other our feelings and emotions? Do we talk about imaginations and inner processes? Do we talk about what the other triggers inside of us while we are listening? And can I experience the other as a holistic being with facial expressions, gestures, and body language?

8. *In the cycle of experience*

The dimension of time has a particular meaning in coaching, since there is the challenge of creating an intensive relationship within a relatively small number of sessions, which often touches on highly personal life topics. This can only take place when the relationship develops within and from session to session in synchronous

cycles of experience (Nevis, 2013). If this does not occur or stagnates, the coach should interpret this as a sign that "re-contracting" is necessary.

9. *You and me*

Intensive encounters with plenty of contacts are characterized by the fact that what happens also changes all parties involved. Both the coach and the client experience the interaction and learn. Hence, it cannot be one-sided but instead needs to be a two-sided process of developing together in a co-creative mode.

10. *Talking about talking*

Meta-communication (Bateson, 2000), i.e., communication about communication itself, is an important means of shaping relationships. A robust coaching relationship is characterized by the option for the coach and the client to constructively broach the relationship and any irritations.

The Coaching Theme Perspective

Finally, every coaching theme can be understood as a part or an aspect of the cycle of experience. Whether a client wants to change his or her job, looks for new goals or visions for their life, has an issue with work-life-balance, is involved in an interpersonal conflict, wants to develop their leadership role, or needs to develop team collaboration, there are always underlying needs which drive this process. When clients ask for coaching, they are stuck at a certain point in the cycle of experience and need help to go further or start it from a different point. The form of contact at the respective point in the cycle is interesting for a coaching approach, because it allows for the client to derive possible solutions from it. There is no one-to-one correspondence between coaching themes and the forms of contact, but in many cases, there are typical coaching topics with respective underlying forms of contact.

Let us start with the *confluent* form. The main characteristics of this form are the orientation to the external, the weak or missing contact boundary, and the harmony-seeking behavior. Typical coaching themes are work–life balance, self-management, time-management, coping with stress, health behavior, role clarity, e.g., in leadership, etc. In all cases, the wish to avoid rejection from others and the loss of contact with one's own needs leads to confluent behavior and therefore to coaching relevant issues.

The *intentional* form is marked by an orientation to one's own imaginations and goals, an extended contact boundary, and demanding behavior toward others. Typical coaching themes are located in the field of conflicts, either interpersonal or in/with an organization. In this case, the image of the other, i.e., of the counterpart, is more a result of the projections on him or her than with the reality. The more psychic energy is activated, the harder is it to correct this image and to be open to a different perspective. The coaching theme in the case study is characterized by this form of contact.

Typical of the *retroflexive* form is none-acting, holding back impulses and feelings, being shy, and hesitating to wrestle with the issues inside the self. Typical retroflexive behavior is connected with coaching themes like job change and career development, presentation skills, personal standing, convincing communication, difficult complex decisions, etc. What these themes have in common is the client's fear, caused by their projections, of pursuing their own needs and ideas, and thereby revealing themselves.

Finally, the *normative* form is characterized by avoiding full engagement and staying distant, in a rational and evaluative position behind the contact boundary. In coaching we meet clients with problems with establishing relationships, admitting mistakes and weaknesses, or acting too rationally instead of trusting intuition and emotions, etc. as shown in the case study. These issues are often connected with the role expectations of someone in a higher hierarchical position. At this level, they have immense responsibility, are in the spotlight of a broad audience, and have no honest feedback from dependent subordinates. Sometimes the *normative* form is the underlying principle for extreme behaviors like *narcissism*, *machiavellianism,* and *psychopathy*, i.e., the *dark triad* (Jonason & Webster, 2012).

In summary, the forms of contact can be helpful to understand the client's situation and to generate useful hypotheses for the coaching process. At this point, it is important to emphasize again that the theory of contact does not provide a model for personality psychology, but a situational blueprint to describe the behavior of an individual in a certain situation within a certain context with specific others (Bachmann, 2019).

Intervention Strategies

There are two main strategies to strengthen contact ability: establishing sustainable relationships and supporting clients in coping with their issues on the basis of the contact concept. The *first* strategy is to foster awareness about their own needs and the relationship to others in general, while the *second* strategy focuses on the different forms of contact.

Working with the Cycle of Experience

Not only is every action embedded in the cycle of experience, but every coaching session also follows this model and can be seen as a space where intense contact experiences are possible. This means being aware and acting carefully during the coaching process and taking into consideration the different phases of the cycle and their specific features and process elements. Table 1 shows a procedure for a coaching session that follows the cycle of experience. For a more detailed description see Bluckert (2015).

Table 1 A coaching session along the cycle of experience

Cycle of experience	Coaching session
Sensation	(Re)connecting, building the relationship, connecting to the "here & now"
Awareness	"Fatten the figure," extracting the coaching theme
Activation	Goal for the session, success criteria, working alliance
Action	Processing the theme (by using appropriate coaching tools)
Contact	Solutions and options, contact moments, experiments
Integration	Insights and findings, current feelings, next steps, interim tasks
Withdrawal	Closing the session

In contrast to many other approaches a Gestalt coach would start the coaching session with the question: "What do you feel right now?" or "What do you need in this moment?" The focus is on the "here and now" and not on the "then and there." The current experience is the object of observation, of learning, and of development. The session starts from there, with the upcoming *sensations* at that moment. The coach helps the client to become more *aware* of their internal processes and the emerging needs, feelings, thoughts, ideas, sorrows, etc. Whatever arises as a figure from the ground is welcome and could lead to valuable experiences. In the next phase, the focus lies on "fattening the figure", which means digging deeper and exploring further in the client's theme and *activating* psychic energy. The result is a coaching contract with a clear goal and success criteria for the current session with a theme which the client wants to work on. This is followed by the phase of processing the coaching theme, which is most comparable with other coaching models. Typical elements include: changing perspectives; sorting or structuring complexity; talking about projections, experiences or beliefs; locating resources; working with upcoming emotions; thinking about *actions* or possible solutions. In the *contact* phase, possible options or solutions can be tested by conducting experiments. A Gestalt experiment is a typical method (one can say the one and only "Gestalt-tool") that allows the client to come in contact with the possible novelty in the secure space of the coaching relationship. An experiment is a simple and co-created task: some words which have to be said, gestures, a different body stance, etc. that allow the client to gain new experiences under the coach's guidance. As a result, emotions, impressions, and thoughts can be discussed and integrated into the coaching question. The session ends with the *integration* of the experiences which were gained during the coaching session. In this phase, the awareness must again turn inward to process findings, insights, feelings, and emotions and to get an idea of the next possible steps. The integration can be fostered by an interim task done by the client before entering the next session.

This short description of a coaching session along the cycle of experience can only give a small glimpse into the real work. For all of those who are interested in further and more detailed information, the Gestalt books by Bluckert (2015) or Joyce and Sill (2010) are excellent sources.

Intervening the Contact

Nevertheless, whether the contact behavior of the coach, of the client, the coaching relationship, or the contact behavior in the coaching theme are at issue, the forms of contact are always caused by the same underlying processes and can be influenced by general interventions which will be discussed in this section.

The idea is that every form of contact is an expression of the current underlying needs or system functions (Bachmann, 2019). The functions are *adaption, goal attainment, integration and latent structure maintenance* first described by Parsons (1951). The first letters stand for the famous abbreviation AGIL.

When individuals are using the *confluent* form, the underlying system function is *adaption* to the environment. The individual's own needs are put on hold, the excitement is weakened, the attention focus is outside, and the contact boundary is not really noticeable. So, the opposite of all of these points is the solution to dealing with confluency. But it is easier said than done. In reality, it is often extremely hard for a person to change their confluent form of contact because of fearing rejection and losing the acknowledgment. On the other hand, confluency has the function of building relationships of trust and nearness, so a balance between one's own needs and the other's needs has to be found.

To overcome too intense, too frequent, or inappropriate confluency, the first step is to become aware of one's own behavior. When is confluency important and necessary? When does it prevent contact? In a coaching process, one could perhaps start with an observation task for the client in which they distinguish normal confluent from over-confluent situations in their daily life. Then, the situational, contextual, and interpersonal factors of these situations could be investigated to identify patterns. In a possible next step, the coach could work with the client's needs and wishes. For this, awareness exercises are helpful so that the client can learn to feel what happens inside before he or she starts an action to please others. It takes time for the client to gradually learn that he or she is still a valuable and lovable human being despite negative reactions when they occasionally pursue or talk about their own needs.

The pathopsychological extreme of confluency is asthenic (dependent) personality disorder, see ICD-10 F60.7 (World Health Organization, 2015). To stay in the professional field of coaching and to avoid slipping accidentally into a psychotherapeutic area, it is important for the coach to be aware of chronic symptoms and signs of personality disorders. This of course applies to coaching in general, but especially if the coaching theme is closely related to the core of the client's personality.

The *intentional* form of contact is driven by goals and ideas. According to Parsons (1951), the corresponding system function is *goal attainment;* the intentional form is important for an individual to develop goals and to attain them. The needs are present, the contact boundary is extended, the excitement is high, and the attention focus is in the middle zone, where ideas, thoughts, and images are feeding the projections. But sometimes projections do not correspond with reality. They occur in our minds and cause us to see only what we want to see. This is very typical

in conflict situations but also in every situation where gathering more data and different perspectives may be necessary to avoid running into a dead end. The high level of psychic energy in this phase of the cycle of experience explains, besides other factors, why it is sometimes so difficult to change the chosen path and to be open to new options. To cope with the intentional form, the first step is to distinguish between three zones of awareness: the inner zone, the middle zone, and the environment. In addition, it is essential to be open to new facts and a new perception of reality. In a conflict situation, especially on a higher escalation level, it is hard for the involved parties to correct the image they have of the other and to be empathetic.

There are two main approaches to tackling this form of contact behavior. The first is to enable the client's willingness to consider new facts and ideas without fighting against his or her construction of reality. For the intervening coach, this means giving the client appreciation, acceptance, confirmation, and acting without intentions of change. Offering instead of pushing, discovering instead of instructing are the main challenges for the coach when dealing with the client's projections. The second intervention is the change of perspectives. This can be done by inviting the client to look at the situation from a different point of view, to empathize with the other, or to look at the situation and the relationship from a meta-perspective. There are many methods to do so, such as systemic questions, role changes with chairs, or constellations with figures or symbols. The intentional form has its extreme correspondence in the paranoid personality disorder, see ICD-10 F60.7 (World Health Organization, 2015) which must be approached with caution.

The *retroflexive* form has the system function of *inhibiting action* and of keeping "the self's parts together." To avoid failure, shame, and fault the contact boundary is closed, excitement is inhibited, and no action happens. The important and positive aspect of retroflection is the inhibition of psychic energy and spontaneous impulses which is necessary to enable togetherness and social life. All social norms and rules, culture and tradition can be seen as collective introjections to regulate the acting of the individual as a member of a society (see Smith, 1976). The dark side of retroflection is the non-fulfillment of needs - the suppression of words, gestures, emotions, and non or very tentative acting.

The first questions in regard to retroflection are: Where is the psychic energy? Followed by: what are the mechanisms of inhibition or deflection? In a one-to-one conversation, the best way to deal with retroflection is to create safety and trust, allowing the client to take their time and to make mistakes. Furthermore, it is important to restrain oneself from giving the other more space in the conversation. If retroflection is part of the coaching theme, then there are two directions of action for the coach. The first is to investigate the projections on the consequences of the possible actions. For example, what will happen if you do this or that? What could person X or Y say? How can you protect yourself and control the situation when you start following your needs? The second way is to encourage the client to give up inhibitions and to start possible actions directed at need fulfillment, this is done through acceptance and confirmation (Roger & Buber, 1992). Working with experiments is a sustainable way to support this process and helps to transfer the

experiences gained in the coaching relationship to reality. The corresponding personality disorder to the retroflexive form is the anankastic personality, see ICD-10 F60.7 (World Health Organization, 2015). If the client is indeed afflicted with this personality disorder intervention opportunities within a coaching setting are limited.

The function of the *normative* form of contact is to control system changes and to maintain its internal structures. The contact boundary is withdrawn, the attention focus is outside, and evaluation and control dominate the behavior. At this point, the self decides what is assimilable, and what not. It is considering the options between change and stabilization. The normative form thus allows controlled action and taking part without the risk of being considered weak, imperfect, or sensitive. For this reason, the preferred area of interaction is the world of numbers and facts and not the world of emotions and uncertainties. This leads to less engagement, a distant position, and a critical normative view of others. A client who uses the normative form of contact is not in a teachable moment (Looss, 2008).

Coping with the normative form is a challenge. There is a risk of becoming part of a cat and mouse chase. Trying to meet all the demands and expectations of the normative behavior with the aim to come in contact with the other can result in no or only a weak response of understanding and acceptance from the normative counterpart. A more promising approach is to stop wrestling with the facts and the "right or wrong" and to make the first step into the relationship by opening oneself up and talking about one's own uncertainty and weakness regarding the coaching process. This first step can help establish trust and certainty so that the normatively acting client can give up his or her distanced and evaluative behavior. In the movie "Good Will Hunting" the therapist (Robin Williams) acts in the very same way to get closer with his arrogant and clever client (Mat Damon). If the normative form is a part of the coaching theme, difficulties in building relationships, micromanagement, over-controlling, and perfectionism are typical. The normative form corresponds to the narcissistic personality disorder, see ICD-10 F60.7 (World Health Organization, 2015). The main characteristics are manipulating others, behaving recklessly, a strong need for admiration, and high susceptibility to insults from others. For these reasons, coaching people with this form of contact is difficult work. The key to success lies in one's own self-confidence and not needing confirming responses from the other. The consolatory certainty is: "A narcissist is learning secretly only."

Summary

In the previous chapter, a short glimpse of the Gestalt approach and its application in coaching was given. The aim was to deliver interesting insights into contact processes and interaction in coaching and some ideas of coping with contact problems in the coaching relationship and helpful approaches for interventions as a coach concerning the clients coaching themes. Of course, it is not possible to explain the whole complexity and richness of this approach in a short book chapter, so that for more detailed information and intervention possibilities the reception of Gestalt literature or a Gestalt-based coaching training is recommended.

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The Future of AI in Coaching

David Clutterbuck

Scenario

Here is a scenario from a not-so-distant future executive coaching session, based on trends we can already identify.

Jane is an experienced coach, having her third session with an executive client. In preparation for the assignment, she interviewed the client, his boss, members of his team, and three of his peers. Not many years before, Jane would have had laboriously to work through all this data, along with 360 feedback, to gain a picture of the client in his systems. Now, however, her AI assistant has done much of the repetitive, analytical work for her. The AI listened in to all the interviews and administered the 360-questionnaire on her behalf, produced interview transcripts and then searched them for recurrent themes. The first few times Jane worked with the AI, it was time consuming—it took several iterations before she learned how to ask the right questions and the AI learned how to formulate the data she was looking for. The AI has also adapted to her style of coaching. It now distinguishes, for example, between when she is pausing to give the client time to think, or because she is unsure of what to do next. In the latter case, it asks permission to make suggestions or observations. When the client does not understand a question Jane asks, the AI will automatically offer different wordings, based on a store of relevant questions already programmed in and enlarged by learning from questions she has asked other clients in similar situations.

The AI monitors the client, too. Jane suspects that the client is putting on an act to convince her (and himself) that he is coping with the stress of his job role better than is actually the case. With the client's permission, Jane has asked the AI to alert her

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when it detects physical and tonal signs of increased stress. She reflects this back to the client and invites him to explore what is going on for him at this point.

In a previous session, Jane has observed that client uses certain words or phrases. She has asked the AI to track the frequency of some of and also the degree of emotion attached to these usages. The AI shows her clusters of words and phrases with similar associations, or with similar emotions. At one point, she says to the client: "I noticed that you used the word 'trapped' a couple of times. You also spoke about room for manoeuvre and being down in the weeds. Can we try to bring those thoughts together?"

During the coaching sessions, Jane unobtrusively indicates to the AI that what has just been said is worthy of particular notice. She does not have to think about these indications—the AI has learned how her physical movements and changes in tone relate to heightened curiosity, or to a sense that something just said is significant. At intervals in the conversation and in the summary at the end, when Jane asks questions, such as "What have you learned?" or "What has changed for you from this conversation?", the AI brings up on screen brief reminders of these moments. At one point in the session, Jane recognises that the drama triangle is being played out (clarifying his own role in the triangle of victim, persecutor and rescuer, (Berne, 2011). She pauses the conversation to explore with the client what is going on. "Let me show you how this triangle works", she says, revealing it as a diagram, which the AI has already anticipated she may use.

Jane finds that she is now able to concentrate more fully on the conversation and on the client, because she is not worried about what to say or do next. She also feels more confident in drawing upon her own experience, because she is less focused on the coaching process.

After the coaching session, Jane and the AI spend time reviewing the coaching session. They identify points, where she was hesitant and she reviews what was happening for her at that moment. They take a question that did not and as intended and the AI makes suggestions on how it might have been phrased differently. Jane identifies a couple of issues, which she would like to take to supervision. She also selects a two-minute chunk of the conversation to share with the supervisor, because she feels intuitive that she could have done better, but is not sure how.

When Jane meets with her supervisor, Naomi, both bring their Ais into the conversation. The supervisor's AI not only has all the functions that Jane's does, but it is able to follow up the supervisor's intuitions by interrogating Jane's AI. At one point, both jane's AI and the supervisor's offer suggestions of alternative questions Jane could have asked the client. Some of these are the same, but it is those that are different that stimulate the deepest discussion. The supervisor also asks "When you were made aware of your client's increased anxiety, what was happening within you?" The two AIs are able to provide a comparison that indicates possible transference. The discussion exploring this is deepened by the revelation that in a couple of cases, heightened anxiety in Jane preceded that in the client.

Armed with additional insights, Jane is now able to plan the next session with this client. With the help of the AI, which has also learned from the supervisor's AI, she identifies several areas to revisit or build upon.

What Do We Mean by AI?

According to Nello Christianini at the University of Bristol intelligence can be defined as an agent pursuing a goal in an environment it cannot fully control. The agent senses information, learns, adapts, plans or reasons, then acts. The term artificial intelligence (sometimes called augmented intelligence) is used to describe a range of digital applications intended to enhance, support or in some cases replace human activity. These range widely in complexity and ability on a spectrum of weak to strong. Humans have "general intelligence", meaning we can apply learned knowledge in many situations and environments. An AI has "weak" intelligence: the ability to do one thing really well.

A practical definition of AI (Bughin & Hazan, 2017, p. 4) is "the broad collection of technologies, such as computer vision, language processing, robotics, robotic process automation and virtual agents that are able to mimic cognitive human functions". AI applies algorithms to information it is presented with, following pre-set rules to make predictions and deductions. Advanced forms of AI are able to develop new algorithms through experimentation.

Table 1 presents one way of distinguishing between these levels of complexity and potential to replace or enhance humans. Level one encompasses the most currently available coachbots, which essentially automate the application and analysis of diagnostic questionnaires. The context here is one of highly predictable, limited responses within a very specific context.

Table 1 Coachbot v AI

Coachbot v AI

Entity	Capability	Function	Role
Coachbot	Reproduces human algorithms	Applies human algorithms more consistently	Tool
Basic AI	Learns and adapts human algorithms	Develops and experiments with new algorithms	Adaptable tool
Advanced AI	Able to pass Turing Test; moderated creativity	Predicts human interaction and responses	Collaborator
Super AI	Intentional and self-aware; exhibits curiosity	Elements of emotional intelligence	Partner

Level two begins to imitate conversations between a coach and a client. Chatbots are designed by conversational architects to mimic human conversations. The lengthy design process starts with some common conversational sequences, from which the bot "learns". Each conversational failure generates a revision of responses in a process of continuing editing that gradually expands the range of conversational responses. Chatbots learn to distinguish between, for example, questions and statements. The chatbot becomes a virtual agent representing the organisation and its values. It has the ability to understand human language and the user's intent, and to respond correctly, and with at least some appearances of a distinct personality (Williams, 2020).

Whilst more versatile than level one, these algorithms are still limited to closely defined, predictable, conversational dialogue. The GROW model (Goal, Reality, Options, Will) (Whitmore, 1992; see chapter: Definition and Concepts of Coaching) is a good example of a coaching approach that lends itself to this level of digitalisation. The conversation has a consistent structure and a relatively limited scope of questions and models that can be applied to a definable range of commonly occurring situations and contexts—for example, "how do I structure my time?" or "how do I decide whether to take this job offer?" SEB, a Swedish bank, has an AI called Aida that recognises frustration in callers' voices when they do not get the help they need and uses this to upgrade its repertoire of responses.

Level 3 occurs when the quality of the conversation is such that the human is either unaware they are talking to a machine; or chooses to treat it as a person. Whilst opinions vary as to whether we have reached this stage, it is notable that AI used in therapeutic counselling is preferred by many post-traumatic stress patients, because they feel it is less judgmental than a human therapist (Gratch, 2014). Human-like characteristics are emerging rapidly—for example, AI assistants are being trained to offer even more complex and subtle human traits, such as sympathy. The start-up Koko, an off-shoot of the MIT Media Lab, has developed technology that can help AI assistants seem to commiserate (Wilson & Daugherty, 2018). The study of emotions using AI has been a research theme for more than two decades (Kaiser & Wehrle, 1994; Pfeifer, 1988). Houwei Cao, assistant professor in the Department of Computer Science at New York Institute of Technology predicts that robot waiters, for example, will soon be able to recognise customers' feelings sufficient to manage complaints as or more effectively than humans in the same role.

Level 4 requires the AI not just to imitate human ways of thinking but to have *emotions* and *consciousness*. The question arises: "Is it possible to develop these characteristics in a machine, when we don't understand them in ourselves?" The difficulties of this were explored in a review by Graziano (2019), who defines four ingredients of human-like consciousness: artificial attention, a model of that attention, the right range of content information (information about things like senses and emotions) and a sophisticated search engine to access the internal models and talk about them. An AI would have to duplicate in some manner the way humans construct thought: "When we look at something, the brain signals intensify until the information becomes available to systems around the brain, so we can visualise, talk about it, draw it, remember it... If someone asks you how the taste of a lemon

Table 2 Modes of learning

Mode	Coach-Mentor	AI
Information	Limited depth, high breadth	High depth, limited breadth
Knowledge	Limited depth, high breadth	Moderate depth and breadth, depending on what databases linked to
Skills	Observation and feedback, plus motivation	Potentially higher levels of observation (faster and more comprehensive, including micro-movements and tonal analysis)
Wisdom	Mentor drawing on narratives and values important—the parable as a source of learning	Currently beyond the scope of AI

compares with that of an orange, you translate the speech into taste information and compare the two tastes, then translate back into words to give your answer". We cannot yet conceive of how to do this. Indeed, as Nicholas Shea of Oxford University describes it: "We can come closer to defining what it is to be an elephant than what it is to be conscious" (Anon, 2018). According to du Sautoy (2019) "What's missing [in AI] is intentionality... Our own drive for artistic creation... is bound up with the hard problem of consciousness... Perhaps only when we had consciousness did we start to wonder what was going on in other people's minds and want to share our internal worlds – and begin to express ourselves creatively".

Another relevant concept here is wisdom, which we can define as the art and practice of reflecting upon and learning from experience. Bots and AI can learn, but they cannot reflect, not least because that requires access to both the rational and the emotional brain. I define three levels of wisdom:

- Lean wisdom—context (task) specific.
- Broad wisdom—reflection on life experience (personal and vicarious).
- Meta-wisdom—brings together multiple, shifting perspectives.

An AI can accumulate much greater volumes of data—and hence become more expert—than can a human in a specifically defined field. It is like a contestant on a quiz show, who knows all the facts about the 1924 Olympics, but flunks every question outside of that narrow domain. Future AI will be adept at combining two or more domains at a level of detail humans cannot. But it will not be able to draw on domains, such as life, that it cannot experience. Meta-wisdom belongs solely to humans, at least for the foreseeable future, because it requires consciousness. The nature of consciousness remains a mystery, which we may not want to solve, according to Anil Seth, professor of cognitive and computational neuroscience at the University of Sussex, and co-director of the Sackler Centre for Consciousness Science University of Sussex: "If we can crack how consciousness works, it threatens our sense of self and our notions of free will...".

Table 2 compares human coaches and mentors to AI from the perspective of the four modes of learning: information, knowledge, skills and wisdom.

The overall message from these comparisons is that our future relationship with AI will be one of gradual, increasing accommodation, in which both we and AI algorithms learn with and from each other. The core of all coaching is raising awareness by extracting clarity and purpose from complexity, in order to exercise better judgement and create more positive outcomes. As long as the development of both AI and coaching retain that perspective, the partnership that evolves will be of great benefit to coaches, clients and the wider human systems they serve.

The Benefits and Dangers of AI

In 1997, IBM's Deep Blue computer beat the world's reigning chess champion Gary Kasparov, leading to speculation that robots would soon take over any area of human expertise. It has not happened. Today, the best chess players are not computers, nor humans, but both working together, doing what they do best. The machine is better able to calculate, predict and follow the rules; the human partner is better able to exercise judgement and to *break* the rules. When machines learn to support human decision-making and people learn how to use the analytical power available to them, outcomes are typically better than for either on their own (Wilson & Daugherty, 2018).

That is the positive side. On the negative side:

- The competence of the robot is dependent on the algorithms built into it and the data set from which it has learned. Amongst examples of negative outcomes here are the greater likelihood of being knocked down by a self-drive car if you are black than white; and the greater likelihood of being refused bail if you are black rather than white. Such phenomena are described as AI bias (Thomas, 2019). In both cases, the biases of the programmers and of the samples they drew upon distorted the calculations of the algorithms.
- In general, it is not possible for an AI to explain *how* it reached a specific conclusion, because the bias is systemic and the result of many small decisions, rather than one decision that can be isolated.

How Can an AI Add Value to Coaching?

As yet, the scale of adoption of coachbots, let alone AI, by coaches is small. A study by Terblanche and Cilliers (2020) exploring coaches' attitudes towards the technology found that the main reason for considering adopting the technology was its ability to enhance performance. The authors point to a lack of evidence-based information about this entire emerging field: "AI in particular, has the potential to replace or augment human coaches in certain instances; however, it seems that

speculation and hype is clouding our understanding of its true potential. This is reminiscent of the lack of evidence-based practice in coaching itself".

Each level of AI has the potential to add value to coaching:

- Levels 1 and 2 are already reducing the time required for data gathering, for both individual and team coaching. A limitation, however, compared to human interviews, is that the data are confined to the issues in the questionnaires. Whilst it is possible to add non-generic questions, a human interviewer is also able to detect and explore issues outside the limited context of the algorithms.
- Levels 3 and 4 offer the potential for a partnership between human and AI, based on leveraging the strengths of each and learning together.

Who Is at Risk from AI?

All of the above suggests that, whilst simplistic coaching may be under threat, truly developmental coaching can be greatly enhanced by partnerships between coaches and AI. Indeed, we can go further and say that it is in the coaching profession's best interests actively to encourage such integration. Specifically, we can speculate that coaches are most at risk of being made obsolete by algorithms, if:

- They rely on simplistic models and predictable processes.
- They think of coaching as something they *do* rather than something that defines who they *are*.
- They are focused on relatively narrow skills sets or transfer of specific domains of knowledge (skinny wisdom).
- They are unable to shift from linear perspectives (client—problem—solution) to systemic perspectives (in which the focus of conversation becomes the client *in their systems*) (Cavanagh & Lane, 2012).

Coach–AI Partnerships

Table 3 is based on coaching at its simplest—an expanded view of the GROW model. The more complex the relationship and the nature of the change intended, the less effective an AI will be. However, the AI can continue to add value in partnership with a coach at each level of complexity.

Table 4 offers some perspectives on skills of coaches, AI and coach–AI partnerships.

Table 5 talks about the perspective of "qualities" or attributes in the same three contexts.

As illustrated in the case study at the start of this chapter, the coach–AI partnership supports the coaching process and the client by:

Table 3 Coach, AI and the coach–AI partnership: process

Tasks	Coach	AI	Coach–AI partnership
Establish purpose and goals	Effective coaches work with context and values before agreeing goals	Focus on the goal and routes to achieving it Unable to work easily with evolving goals	Deeper exploration of context and purpose Able to look beyond initial goals
Building client self-awareness	Uses diagnostics alongside intuition to guide the client towards self-insight Builds on insights to shape new horizons	Uses standard tools and questions to help the client become more self-aware. Stops at the point of potential insight. Unable to check how deep the insight has been	Identify new avenues to explore. When bot brings the client to an insight, it creates the platform for the client to explore it more deeply with the coach
Decision-making and critical thinking	More creative, but more susceptible to failures of reasoning and decision-making traps	Follows logic and decision-making processes more closely. Unable to include tacit knowledge or "unknown knowns"	Better at finding solutions that are both/and rather than either/or
Generating options	Intuitive understanding of client of possibilities in light of cultural variables and values; and of what does and does not work	Offers both "liner thinking" (obvious) options and "way out" options	Coach can moderate and add to AI suggestions to create a wider palette of options. Capacity to be genuinely innovative
Motivating	The Pygmalion Effect—motivating power of one person's belief in what another can achieve	Client has to generate own motivation	Combining intrinsic and extrinsic motivation
Follow-up	Coach acts as a conscience to the client. Difficult to keep reminding the client without appearing to nag and taking responsibility from the client to the coach	More rigorous at reminding	Easier to monitor progress and give continued support without seeming intrusive

- Raising the coach's awareness of what is happening in the room—in particular, the hidden emotions and silent thoughts of the client; for example, when the client is avoiding an issue.
- Raising awareness of hidden patterns by comparing words, phrases, themes and conversation structure with previous coaching sessions with the same client; and with a library of many other conversations on similar themes between coaches and clients.
- Suggesting different ways the coach might progress the conversation—for example, lines of enquiry.
- Offering confirming or disconfirming evidence in response to the coach's checking in on their intuitions.

Table 4 Coach, AI and the coach–AI partnership: skills

Skills	Coach	AI	Coach and AI together
Listening	Has wider store of mental associations to aid sense-making May filter out important data	Has large, but narrow store of associated algorithms and data to draw upon May pay too much attention to irrelevant data	Shifts focus more towards how the client makes sense of their issue
Questioning	Intuitive recognition of the "right" question Intuitive understanding of when *not* to ask a question	Able to draw upon a large database of questions from previous conversations. Difficulty in deviating from the "script"	Coach spends less time worrying about the next question, knowing that, if they do not have one, they can fall back on the AI
Rapport building	Building deep trust enables the client to delve further into issues and face their fears	AI can seem less judgemental, but can only build "transactional trust"	A big unknown! However, rapport with a coach may be undermined, if the client suspects "collusion" between coach and AI. Transparency is vital
Giving feedback	Coach gives feedback both on aspects previously agreed and on other things they notice	AI gives feedback only on what it is programmed to do. Can make comparisons with other people in its database, to provide a sense of proportion. (e.g. 83% of people fall into this category…)	Automating multirater feedback and analysis can put ownership of the process firmly in the client's hands and suggest topics to discuss in coaching
Use of self	In Gestalt mode, the coach is able to use their own feelings and associations to generate new avenues of enquiry	AI lacks a sense of self and can only draw upon observation or comparison with other similar conversations	Coach can use AI's observations to check their intuitions. (e.g. when the coach has a sense of discomfort, does the AI observe relevant changes in the client's tone or micro-expressions?)
Being a role model	More an aspect of being a mentor than a coach	Not applicable	Not applicable

- Instantaneously making available information on relevant models and frameworks.
- Supporting coach and client in simplifying complex situations through transparent decision-making algorithms.
- Suggesting lines of enquiry and possible questions—as well as rephrasing questions to make them more powerful.
- Identifying when the coach and the client, who have different backgrounds or first languages, maybe attaching different meanings to words or phrases used.

Table 5 Coach, AI and the coach–AI partnership: qualities

Qualities	Coach	AI	Coach and AI together
Credibility	Combination of who the coach is and the experience they bring—leads the client to place more weight on their guidance	The Wikipedia effect—generally helpful but not to be trusted!	Likely to increase client confidence—but needs research to verify
Compassion	Feeling for the client and understanding their perspective	Rudimentary understanding of the emotions people generally in this situation may feel	May help the coach avoid oversympathising and losing their objectivity
Curiosity	The instinctive desire to learn more and to follow a conversational path wherever it may lead	Algorithms require AI to follow the most logical path	May make explorations more thorough. High potential to ensure that the conversation comes back to "parked" issues that might otherwise be forgotten
Courage	The instinct to do or say what feels right	N/A	AI could potentially act as the coach's own conscience, prompting them to reflect on their own motivations both during coaching sessions or in reflection afterwards

- Maintaining a record of this and past sessions, for review.
- Supporting the coach in reflecting on each coaching session, identifying themes for supervision and their personal development plan as a coach.
- Supporting the client in his or her own reflections.

A Research Agenda

As an emerging field, coach–AI partnerships provide extensive opportunities for research. Amongst questions, which it will be fruitful to explore, are:

- What issues arise in the context of client confidentiality?
- What does good practice look like in a coach–AI partnership?
- What competencies and standards will be relevant?
- The mechanisms by which cultural and other biases may be aggravated or ameliorated within a coach–AI partnership.
- Issues arising from delegation of tasks from coach to AI.
- The ethical dimension—how do ethical codes need to be amended to address the challenges of increasing use of AI in coaching and in coach–AI partnerships.

It is noticeable that the existing literature tends to be written either by coaching specialists or by technology specialists. Both research and technical developments will benefit from cross-pollination and collaboration.

Summary

AI's increasing role in coaching is inevitable. Coaches have a choice—they can bury their heads in the sand or embrace the new technologies with enthusiasm, or find a position somewhere between.

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Gender Theoretical Impulses for Theory and Practice of Coaching

Mechthild Bereswill

Introduction

Gender, or more precisely social constructions of gender difference and related institutionalizations such as the division of labour between the sexes, characterize everyday interactions in organizations without this always becoming explicit. This also applies to counselling processes, which are also characterized by often implicit attributions of femininity and masculinity. Reflecting on such processes and including them in the knowledge gained, for example in management coaching and management supervision, expands the analysis of processes and the subsequent options for action. Gender is at the same time a relational social category that always develops its structuring effect in combination with other categories such as social origin or age (Bereswill et al., 2015; Knapp, 2008, 2010, 2013). Therefore, in dealing with gender, it is possible to understand what also applies to other social constellations in which difference and inequality are intertwined: A reflective approach to diversity always includes dealing with entrenched social inequalities.

In the following considerations, the focus is explicitly on gender, without further differentiating the intersectional dimensions. Thus, gender is not set as a master category for difference and inequality constellations, but it is nevertheless deliberately emphasised that it makes sense to focus on the significance and impact of gender in counselling processes in order to understand and, if possible, overcome deep-seated mechanisms of difference and inequality. The fact that gender is a relational phenomenon can contribute to further differentiation as a sensitizing concept (Knapp, 2013).

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   The following is a case study that illustrates how gender can be made relevant in leadership conflicts. Subsequently, three different theoretical perspectives on gender are presented, which can support the analytical differentiation of complex social 'situations' as they are addressed in counselling processes. In conclusion, it reflects on the requirements that concepts and practice of coaching (and other procedures) must meet if they are to be designed and practiced in a gender-sensitive manner in the future.

The Functionalisation of Gender in the Context of Leadership Conflicts: A Case Study

In the youth welfare office of a large city, a social worker, Jess, is promoted to the head of a department. A colleague, Phil, whose application did not lead to the desired promotion, is now under Jess' professional supervision. The relationship between the two is extremely tense. In the course of a coaching process, initiated by Jess, the management conflict is discussed. It turns out that Phil has claimed behind Jess' back that she only got the job because she is a woman and also a convinced feminist. Other colleagues, too, have for some time now expressed their concerns about gender inequality.

   The whole situation deeply unsettles Jess and during the process, it becomes clear that she too is beginning to doubt her capability to do the job. She doubts her ability to deal with personal and hurtful discreditations: *Am I being oversensitive? Am I taking the whole situation too personally? Can I not differentiate myself sufficiently and have therefore lost the distance? Perhaps men can after all fall back on another professional socialisation than women and are thus better equipped to deal with difficult situations and power struggles in hierarchies?*

   The example contains some typical aspects concerning the gender policy dimensions of organisations. It is particularly noteworthy that dealing with gender issues can repeatedly lead to highly polarised attitudes, to accusations of ideology and to mutual devaluation (Bereswill, 2009). Gender issues are often functionalised in order to defuse or postpone, professional competition, visible differences in performance and conceptual controversies. Professional competitions for promotion, and controversies, are then staged as gender conflicts.

   Structural and person-related patterns of argumentation are intertwined in the context of dynamics of appreciation and devaluation, which unfold their effects both in the intersubjective relationship between colleagues and in the intra-subjective experience of individuals. In the constructed case study, gender is used to dismantle the qualification of the line. Gender policy measures of the administration are directly related to the professional qualifications of those involved: While women are said to have been promoted in the course of feminist politics, men are assumed to be disadvantaged on the basis of their gender and their leadership qualifications. In this example, on the one hand the significance of gender is made relevant at the level

of decision-making processes in the organisation. On the other hand, one-sided attributions of difference and the associated revaluations and devaluations structure the communication processes in the team and thus implicitly and explicitly underpin the mutual interpretation of the leadership conflict, which are read through gender glasses.

But Jess also falls back on typified self-interpretations of her conflict experiences and patterns of action in order to cope with personal insults and professional devaluations. Is there something typically female about this that makes her insecurities manifest as the result of a gender-bound (professional) biography?

The following section presents various theoretical perspectives on gender. They are not directly action guiding, but are understood as heuristics, against whose background social processes and patterns of action in organisations can be analysed in depth and subsequently possibly reflected and changed.

Dimensions of Gender

The example outlined above illustrates that the significance of gender in organisations (and in society) is controversial and contested. While some are strongly committed to uncovering, analysing and, in the long term, eliminating gender inequalities, others argue that such approaches are counterproductive and lead to new injustices being inflicted on men and boys. The levels of argumentation become blurred when structural aspects such as the unequal distribution of, for example, management positions are equated with attributions of *typically female* and *typically male* behaviour. This is often associated with identity assumptions, because occupational habitualised patterns of action are interpreted as an expression of a specific gender identity.

In order to differentiate between the interdependent structural, interactive and subjective constellations, three selected dimensions of the category gender are outlined below. The focus is on the social-theoretical recording of (1) *gender as a structural category*, (2) *gender as a social construction* and (3) *gender as a category of conflict*. Findings relating to social structural contexts and entrenched inequalities (1) cannot be translated seamlessly into context-specific interactions in which the meaning of gender becomes relevant (2). Nor does the dynamic and conflictual lifelong appropriation and processing of gender differences by the subjects (3) directly reflect social gender relations. This differentiation is important for dealing with gender knowledge in coaching because it helps to analytically differentiate structural inequality, everyday (professional) communication in organisations and the biographical stubbornness of individuals in their interaction.

Gender as a Structural Category

From this perspective, which is also associated with the concept of gender relations, society is understood as a complex interrelationship of different spheres, the entire structure of which is co-structured by gender (Becker-Schmidt, 1993; Bereswill, 2008). Gender is seen here as an inequality dimension in modern society, which has both vertical and horizontal effects, for example on the labour market or in management floors (Pannewitz, 2012, p. 31 ff.). Against this background, the chosen case study from social work refers to a solidified social division of labour with vertical and horizontal inequalities. For example, the majority of women are currently studying social work, but nevertheless the management positions of institutions are disproportionately often occupied by men (Ehlert, 2010, p. 52; Züchner & Cloos, 2010). Conversely, men continue to study much more frequently in the more prestigious scientific and technical fields and are more likely to obtain management positions there than women. These examples point to the connection between inequalities in gender relations and the historical development of a division of labour between the sexes, which links private and professional care work to femininity and sets the relationship between masculinity and work in a complementary way. The consequences associated with these arrangements, such as differences in income, recognition hierarchies and dependency in relationships, are well known.

If gender is understood as a structural category, gender relations are inequality relations that are associated with the disadvantage of women as a social group compared to men as a social group (not as individuals). This position is controversial, not least because it does not take sufficient account of the intertwining of gender with other dimensions of inequality such as class or ethnicity and assumes gender as a master category. This also raises the question of whether there are structural constellations in which women are socially privileged over men. This question brings concepts of masculinity research into focus, which, however, also assumes that masculinity ultimately subordinates femininity structurally (Bourdieu, 2005; Connell, 1987; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005).

In conclusion, it should be emphasised that these theoretical glasses focus on structures of inequality as they can be detected not only in the labour market but also in the fabric of social organisations. This is the point at which gender policy structural measures come into play by looking for ways to change gender relations in organisations. This creates a paradoxical situation: the structural effect of gender is problematized with the aim of abolishing ascriptions of difference and inequality, and at the same time everyday notions of gender difference are recalled and consolidated. This paradoxical dynamic can be reflected very well with the help of interaction-theoretical social constructivist approaches to gender studies.

Gender as a Social Construction

If gender is conceived as a social construction, our everyday notions of gender difference are at stake. From this interaction-theoretically based perspective, humans have no gender from birth. The affiliation to one or the other gender is rather the result of a continuous mutual reassurance in social exchange with others. This process is referred to as *doing gender* (Gildemeister, 2004; West & Zimmerman, 1987). Gender difference is therefore not *pre-social*, but the result of processes of construction and attribution. "According to this, the construction of gender differences in professional work is an integral part of structuring and symbolizing processes of professional work. In this way the occupational sector contributes in a specific way to the reproduction of gender relations" (Teubner, 2004, p. 429). Angelika Wetter (2002, 2009) has also worked out this relation in her reflections on *gender at work*. Research in this tradition shows how assumptions of *natural* characteristics of the sexes are linked to attributions and evaluations of activities and how such links and evaluations change in the historical process. For example, jobs that are considered to be female or male at a certain point in time may also become female or male occupations in the course of processes of change and reassessment. These changes show that any work can be evaluated as women's work or as men's work, because the analogies between the everyday knowledge of the gender difference and certain activities and work contents are certainly flexible, but only as long as one rule is not violated: the *sameness-taboo* (Rubin, 1975). With this linguistic image, Gayle Rubin captures the implicit social rule that women and men should be different. In other words, they may well do the same thing, it just needs to be possible to describe and evaluate it differently. As a classic illustration, the discourse on *female* leadership that is fixed in terms of differences can be used here: When women take on leadership positions, they should in any case do so *differently* from men (Möller, 2014, p. 14). Such a *sameness-taboo* refers to implicit different valuations associated with the individuals' gender. For example, studies by Christine Williams (1989) on men in female professions (*male nurses*) and women in male professions (*female marines*) in the USA show how all participants work interactively to create and maintain gender differences. It is noteworthy that this work intensifies as soon as one sex moves into a field of activity that was previously attributed to the other sex. However, such processes of *gender migration* (Wetterer, 2009) proceed differently when it comes to work on attributing femininity and masculinity. Angelika Wetterer (1995) describes the associated interaction patterns as a "tug-of-war between difference maximization and difference minimization": If women enter a male-connoted field of activity, they all work intensively on minimizing and thus neutralizing gender differences; if men enter a female profession, they work intensively on maintaining and sharpening the boundaries between femininity and masculinity. This dynamic refers to the subtle connection between difference and hierarchy in the context of work and gender: masculinity subordinates femininity. Whether such patterns can currently be identified is an empirically open question that can only be answered in a differentiated manner for the respective

context. However, the image of the tug-of-war and the various forms of work on difference associated with it are generally stimulating in order to sensitise one's own view of the significance and impact of gender difference in work processes. Thus, the coaching process in the case study reconstructed above could also be promoted by examining and understanding the mutual attributions in the conflict process in the context of gender constructions: Who brings which attributions of difference into play and with which—in particular hidden—valuations are these connected? Such a perspective on interaction and action theory, which only functions under conditions of action relief and retrospective reflection, also prevents premature and one-sided conclusions about the significance that supposedly unambiguous gender identities, binary constructed gender roles or typically *female* or *male* biographies have for labour conflicts.

Gender as a Category of Conflict

From a subject-theoretical perspective, processes of gendering are an ongoing dialectic of tension between external and internal realities: Non-simultaneous social constellations meet the inner conflicts, desires and fantasies of the subject. From this perspective, the social construction of gender is subject to a stubborn appropriation in a historical context. This means that the subjective, inner identifications of people do not merge with the classifying power of the cultural symbol system of bisexuality. To assume a direct link between social action and the subjective significance of gender is therefore abridged and misleading. Such a view of gender, oriented on role-shaped notions of identity, remains on the surface and overlooks the hidden and contradictory meanings and conflict dynamics associated with the lifelong appropriation of gender difference. The same applies to assumptions that presuppose the formation of an unambiguous and stable gender identity as a developmental achievement of children and adolescents and thus put on theoretical glasses that perpetuate bisexuality as the normative basis of psychosocial maturity.

To adequately grasp the complexity of gender from a subject-theoretically grounded perspective rather requires an examination of the opaque and hidden meanings that the often far too obvious and thus overdetermined significance of gender for the social actions of people gains. This consideration requires a broadening of perspectives with regard to the linking of culturally dominant, visible and correspondingly effective constructions of gender difference with subjective patterns of action and interpretation. It is not a matter of a smooth connection between social and subjective dynamics, but rather of a reciprocal generation of social and subjective meaning that is broken in itself several times. The focus is on the intra-subjective conflict dynamics of the subject and the appropriation, expansion and possible transformation or even rejection of cultural constructions of gender difference (Bereswill, 2014). Why does the social worker in charge mentioned in the case study resort to femininity attributions to interpret her conflict? Such a question focuses on the stubborn, subjective patterns of appropriation and processing of

difference and hierarchy. This sharpens the view of the lifelong conflictual debates on social identity constraints (Becker-Schmidt & Knapp, 1987), which have an impact not least in work contexts.

Outlook

The requirement to recognize and understand the intertwined effects of gender relations, gender constructions and lifelong identity processes is a prerequisite. On the one hand, it is necessary to reflect on one's own everyday theories about gender, or rather gender difference, and to question their function for one's own security of orientation and one's own ideas of order: Why should women and men differ in general? What would happen if we stopped *making* such distinctions from now on? On the other hand, a well-founded discussion of gender requires the active and ongoing acquisition of scientific gender knowledge, which interdisciplinary gender studies have been generating and continuously reflecting on for decades: Why does the social division of labour in modern societies correspond so stubbornly with gender? How is it that certain areas and positions are unequally distributed between women and men? What new perspectives do we gain when we critically question the assumption of a clear gender identity? How does one's own view of labour conflicts, for example, open up when differentiating between femininity and masculinity as cultural and mutable constructions of difference on the one hand and women and men as persons on the other? This last question points the way to a challenge that is as tricky for gender studies as it is for the concepts of action in advisory processes. One of the most profound findings of gender studies is that gender is not something that we can take for granted. The meaning, and thus the effect of gender, is rather produced, consolidated or even irritated in concrete contexts. At the same time, however, gender has a structuring effect, for example on the labour market or in the legal system of a society. For the analysis of a conflict, as outlined above, this requires the consistent practice of a double view. Such a view recognizes the also hidden effect of gender in the organizational context and is at the same time trained to suspend and irritate attributions of gender on the interactive and personal level and to problematize its stereotyping function. In order to sharpen this view, it is helpful to consider the complexity of the social category gender. Gender knowledge is available as knowledge for reflection that cannot be directly transferred into models of action, but rather sets one's own perception and that of others in motion and helps to recognise solidified structures. The potential of gender studies for concepts such as coaching thus lies on the one hand in achieving gender-conscious theory and practice. On the other hand, the examination of a quasi-natural category such as gender also supports a general sensitisation for the complex intertwining of difference and inequality in organisations and in the action orientations of their members.

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Goals in Coaching Practice

Anthony M. Grant and Sean O'Connor

Introduction

It is strange, but the use of goals in coaching is sometimes seen as controversial. Those against goal setting in coaching argue that setting goals restricts the coaching conversation, gets in the way of working with emergent issues, or that goal setting tends to focuses on issues that may be easily measured, but are of no real importance. Others argue that goal setting is too often associated with coaches pushing coachees into working on previously-set but unsuitable goals, and that this approach leads to "lazy" mechanistic coaching. Some coaches say they never use goals in coaching at all. Instead, they say that they help clients discover their values, clarify their intentions, and then work to help them to achieve their personal desires. Other coaches talk about helping clients re-author personal narratives, chart a course, navigate the waters of life, or foster transformational development and change.

Goal setting has even gained a bad name in some sections of academic psychology, with authors asking if goal setting has gone wild, and complaining about the supposed over-use of goal setting in organisations (Ordóñez et al., 2009). There has also been discussion about the limitations of goal setting in the coaching literature (Clutterbuck, 2008, 2010).

All these points have some value. However, I argue that goal theory has much to offer coaching research and practice. There is a large, long-standing body of scientific work on goals and goal setting. A search of the database PsycINFO in

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April 2015 using the keyword "goals" found over 73,118 citations. Yet the academic literature on the use of goals within the area of executive coaching is far smaller, with the keywords "goals" and "executive coaching" producing only 52 citations. Most of these report on the various uses of goal setting in executive coaching practice, with a few empirical studies examining how executive coaching facilitates goal attainment (see Grant, 2013b).

There have been surprisingly few articles discussing theoretical frameworks that explicitly link goal theory to executive coaching. For example, both Gregory and Levy's (2015), and Gregory et al.'s (2011) work argues that control theory (in which goals and feedback are two crucial elements) can provide an important framework for coaching, and Grant (2006) describes an integrative goal-focused approach to executive coaching.

This contribution, is an excerpt of previously published English-language works, presents and extends previous publications (Grant, 2002, 2006, 2013a, 2013b) and drawing on the goal-setting, self-determination and personality literature from the behavioural sciences discusses the concept of goals, presents a definition of goals that can be helpful in coaching practice and describes a model of goal-focused coaching that integrates a number of different perspectives on goal theory and makes those findings tangible and applicable in the coaching context. It also describes coach-specific research that highlights the vital role that coaches' goal-focused skills play in determining successful coaching outcomes.

Do SMART Goals Encourage Scruffy Thinking in Coaching?

From an overview of coaching literature it is clear that many coaches' understanding of goals would be limited to acronyms such as SMART (originally delineated by Doran, 1981; Raia, 1965)—an acronym which equates goals with being specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and time-framed action plans (note: the exact articulation of the SMART acronym may vary between commentators, see *Definitions and Concepts of Coaching* in this Handbook).

Whilst the concepts embodied in the acronym SMART are indeed broadly supported by goal theory (e.g., Locke, 1996) and may well be useful in some instances in coaching practice, I think that the widespread belief that goals are synonymous with SMART action plans has done much to stifle the development of a more sophisticated understanding and use of goal theory within in the coaching community. It is worth reflecting that acronyms such as SMART may well provide useful mnemonics—mnemonics being memorable surface markers of deeper knowledge structures. However, the use of such mnemonics without a clear understanding of the deeper underpinning knowledge may well result in "scruffy" thinking—that is, ill-informed decision making and the cultivation of inaccurate practice doctrines and mythologies, which may make it even more difficult for practitioners to engage with the broader knowledge-base. I hope that this chapter is able to make some headway in addressing this issue.

What Are Goals?

If this chapter is to make a meaningful contribution in terms of the more sophisticated use of goals and goal theory in coaching, we need a clear understanding of what goals are. The term "goal" is generally understood as being "the purpose toward which an endeavour is directed; an objective or outcome" (see for example www.thefreedictionary.com). However, although such understandings are sufficient for everyday use, a more nuanced understanding of the goal construct is needed in coaching. In attempting to develop greater sophistication of the goal construct a range of other terms have been proposed by researchers over the years including "reference values" (Carver & Scheier, 1998), "self-guides" (Higgins, 1987), "personal strivings" (Emmons, 1992), or "personal projects" (Little, 1993). However, such broad definitions make it hard to distinguish between "aims', "objectives", "desires" or "outcomes" and also fail to capture the essence of the goal construct.

The goal construct has been described in terms of cognitions (Locke, 2000), behaviour (Bargh et al., 2001; Warshaw & Davis, 1985) and affect (Pervin, 1982) (for further discussion on these points see Street, 2002). Because these three domains are of great relevance for coaching, I argue that a definition of goals for use in coaching should encompass all three domains.

Cochran and Tesser (1996) present a comprehensive description of a goal as "a cognitive image of an ideal stored in memory for comparison to an actual state; a representation of the future that influences the present; a desire (pleasure and satisfaction are expected from goal success); a source of motivation, an incentive to action" (p. 100 as cited in Street, 2002). This understanding of goals may be particularly useful for coaching because, as Street (2002) argues, it emphasises the role of cognition (in terms of cognitive imagery), as well as affect and behaviour. In addition, and also of great relevance for coaching, is that the purpose of a goal as "a source of motivation and an incentive" is made explicit.

However, whilst this description is a clear advance on the notion that goals are synonymous with SMART action plans, it is still somewhat unwieldy as a working definition. One definition that is succinct, captures the essence of the above issues and is clearly applicable to coaching is Austin and Vancouver's (1996) notion of goals as being "internal representations of desired states or outcomes" (p. 388).

Goals and Self-Regulation Are Central to Coaching

The core constructs of human self-regulation (see *self-regulation in coaching* in this handbook) are a series of processes in which the individual sets a goal, develops a plan of action, begins the action, monitors their performance, evaluates their performance by comparison to a standard, and based on this evaluation changes their actions to further enhance their performance and better reach their goals (Carver & Scheier, 1998). In relation to coaching, the coach's role is to facilitate the coachee's

Fig. 1 Generic model of
goal-directed self-regulation
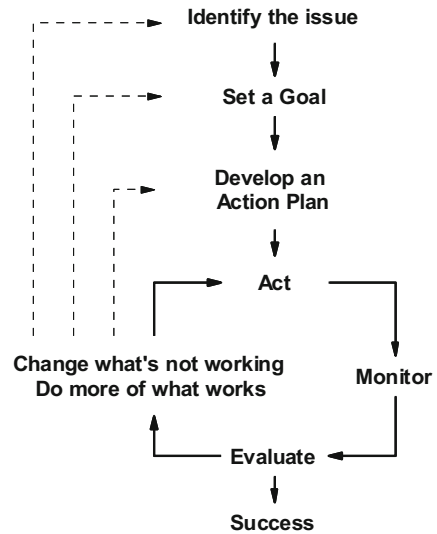
movement through the self-regulatory cycle. Figure 1 depicts a generic model of self-regulation.

In practice, the steps in the self-regulatory cycle do not have clearly separate stages. Rather each stage overlaps with the next. Ideally, the coaching in each stage should aim to facilitate the process of the next. For example, goal setting should be done in such a way as to facilitate the development and implementation of an action plan; the action plan should be designed to motivate the individual into action, and should also incorporate means of monitoring and evaluating performance, thus providing information on which to base follow-up coaching sessions.

This process is clearly at the core of the coaching process, and it is also clear from the above professional bodies' definitions of coaching, that an active orientation towards purposefully creating positive change is a central part of the coaching conversation. Hence all coaching conversations are either explicitly or implicitly goal focused. Having a solid understanding of the multifaceted nature of goals is thus useful in making the novice–expert shift. It is to this issue that we now turn.

The Multifaceted Nature of Goals

Goals are not a monolithic construct. If we are to understand coaching through the lens of goal theory, it is important to distinguish between different types of goals. There are over twenty types of goals that can be used in coaching, including outcome, distal and proximal goals, approach and avoidance goals, performance and learning goals, and higher and lower-order goals, and the actual concrete results which the coachee aims to achieve. These are important distinctions as different types of goals differently impact on coachee's performance and experience of the goal-striving process.

Time Framing

The time framing of goals is an important part of the goal-setting process and can influence the coachee's perception of the attainability of the goal (Karniol & Ross, 1996). *Distal* goals are longer-term goals and are somewhat akin to the broad vision statements often referred to in business or management literature, or the "broad fuzzy visions" referred to in the life-coaching literature (Grant & Green, 2004). *Proximal* goals are shorter term and tend to stimulate more detailed planning than distal goals (Manderlink & Harackiewicz, 1984), and hence are important goals to be used in action planning. In essence, the action steps typically derived in coaching sessions are a series of proximal goals. Combining both distal and proximal goals into the coaching process can lead to enhanced strategy development and better long-term performance (Weldon & Yun, 2000).

Outcome Goals

Many coaching programs explicitly focus on setting *outcome* goals. These tend to be a straightforward statement of some desired outcome (Hudson, 1999); for example, "to increase sales of widgets by 15% in the next 3 months". This is a useful approach to goal setting, because for individuals who are committed and have the necessary ability and knowledge, outcome goals that are difficult and are specifically and explicitly defined, allow performance to be precisely regulated, and thus lead to high performance (Locke, 1996). Indeed, many coaching programs focus purely on the setting of specific "SMART" goals and this approach is indeed supported by some of the goal-setting literature (Locke & Latham, 2002).

However, there are times when overly-specific outcome goals will alienate the coachee, and may actually result in a decline in performance (Winters & Latham, 1996). For individuals who are in a highly deliberative mindset or in a contemplation stage of change (Gollwitzer, 1999), it may be more useful to purposefully set more *abstract* or quite vague goals and focus on developing a broad fuzzy vision, rather than drilling down into specific details and setting more *concrete* goals. For individuals at this point in the change process, vague goals are often perceived as being less threatening and less demanding (Dewck, 1986).

Avoidance and Approach Goals

Avoidance goals are expressed as a movement away from an undesirable state, for example, "to be less stressed about work". Although this is an outcome goal, as an avoidance goal it does not provide a specific outcome target or detail which behaviours might be most useful in attaining the goal. In contrast, an *approach*

goal is expressed as a movement towards a specific state or outcome, for example, "to enjoy a fulfilling balance between work demands and personal relaxation". Not surprisingly, there are differential effects associated with avoidance or approach goals. Coats et al. (1996) found that people who tended to set avoidance goals had higher levels of depression and lower levels of well-being. Other studies have found that the long-term pursuit of avoidance goals is associated with decreases in well-being (Elliot, Andrew J., Sheldon & Church, 1997), and that approach goals are associated with both higher levels of academic performance and increased well-being (Elliot & McGregor, 2001).

Performance and Learning Goals

Performance goals focus on task execution. Performance goals are often competitive goals. The aim here is to perform well on a specific task or to receive positive evaluations from others or outperform others. Performance goals tend to focus the coachee on issues of personal ability (Gresham et al., 1988). An example of a performance goal in executive or workplace coaching might be "to be the very best lawyer in my area of practice". Performance goals can be very powerful motivators, especially where the individual experiences success early in the goal-attainment process. However, performance goals can actually impede performance. This is particularly the case when the task is very complex, or the goal is perceived as highly challenging, and the individual is not skilled or is low in self-efficacy, or where resources are scarce.

In many cases *learning* goals may better facilitate task performance (Seijts & Latham, 2001). Learning goals (sometimes referred to as mastery goals) focus attention on the learning associated with task mastery, rather than the performance of the task. An example of a learning goal in executive or workplace coaching might be "learn how to be the best lawyer in my area of practice". Learning goals tend to be associated with a range of positive processes including the perception of a complex task as a positive challenge rather than a threat, greater absorption in actual task performance (Deci & Ryan, 2002), and enhanced memory and well-being (Linnenbrink et al., 1999). One benefit of setting learning goals is that they tend to be associated with higher levels of intrinsic motivation which in turn is associated with performance (Sarrazin et al., 2002).

Complementary and Competing Goals

Coaches also need to be attuned to the existence of *competing or conflicting* goals. These exist where the pursuit of one goal interferes with the pursuit of another goal. Sometimes goal conflict is easy to identify, for example in the case of the two goals "to spend more time with my family" and "to put more time into work in order to get

a promotion". However, the conflict between goals may not always be immediately evident. For example, the goal "to get my sales force to sell more widgets" may be in perceived conflict with the goal "to have a more hands-off leadership style" if the coachee (a sales manager) finds delegation difficult and is used to a more controlling management style in dealing with the sales force.

The skill of the coach here is to help the coachee find ways to align seemingly conflicting goals and develop complementary goals. Sheldon and Kasser (1995) have argued that such congruence is important in facilitating goal attainment and well-being.

Unconscious Goals?

Human beings are goal-orientated organisms. Without goals, we could not exist as conscious sentient beings. Indeed, Carver and Scheier (1998) argue that all human behaviour is a continual process of moving towards or away from mental goal representations. This is not to say that all goals are consciously held. Under many conditions, we enact complex outcome-directed behaviours even though we may not have consciously set specific goals.

Self-Concordant Goals

Goals that are self-congruent and in alignment with the coachee's core personal values or developing interests are more likely to be engaging and associated with greater effort. Self-concordance theory (Sheldon & Elliot, 1998) offers the coach a useful framework from which to understand and work with the reasons and motivations underpinning goal selection and goal strivings.

Self-concordance refers to the degree to which a goal is aligned with an individual's intrinsic interests, motivations and values. This can be a simple and powerful framework for understanding the link between values and goals. Derived from self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1980) the self-concordance model emphasises the extent to which individuals perceive their goals as being determined by their authentic self, rather than compelled by external forces (see *self-determination in coaching* in this handbook).

It is important that the coachee's goals are as self-congruent as possible, and in the coaching process coaches may need to play an active role in helping their coachees to align goals in order to make them personal and congruent. There are at least four factors that may influence successful goal alignment from this perspective (Sheldon & Elliot, 1999).

First, the coachee needs to be able to identify the enduring and authentic from transitory or superficial whims or desires, thereby more effectively focusing their efforts. Secondly, the coachee needs to be able to distinguish between goals that

represent their own interests and goals that represent the interests of others (Sheldon, 2002). Such insight is contingent on a high level of self-awareness. Given that there are significant individual variations in levels of self-awareness (Church, 1997), some coachees may find this quite hard. Thirdly, the goal content needs to be expressed in a way that aligns the goals with the coachee's internal needs and values. Fourthly, the coach needs to have the ability to recognise when a goal is not self-concordant, and then be able to re-language and reframe the goal so that it does align with the coachee's needs and values.

Goal Hierarchies

Goal hierarchy frameworks are one way of operationalising the notion of goal self-concordance whilst also making explicit links between values, goals and specific action steps. Goals can be also considered as being ordered hierarchically with concrete specific goals being subsumed under *higher-order* and broader, more abstract goals (Chulef et al., 2001). Higher-order goals from this perspective equate to values (see *values and coaching* in this handbook). A valuable model for using goal theory in coaching involves thinking of values as higher-order abstract goals that are superordinate to lower-order, more specific goals, which in turn are super-ordinate to specific action steps.

In using this model in coaching practice, it is important to try to ensure both vertical and horizontal congruency. That is, to ensure that goals are aligned with the client's higher-order values and that any actions designed to operationalise the goals are themselves similarly aligned (vertical alignment) and also to try to ensure horizontal alignment so that goals complement, support and energise each other rather than being, as previously mentioned, *competing or conflicting* goals.

Goal Neglect

The hierarchical model is also very useful to coaches as it can be used to illustrate the effect of goal neglect. The notion of goal neglect is not well-known in the coaching literature but has very useful implications for coaching practice. It refers to the disregard of a goal or a task requirement despite the fact that it has been understood or is recognised as being important (Duncan et al., 1996). In essence, goal neglect occurs when we fail to pay attention to a specific goal of importance, but instead focus our attention on some other goal or task, resulting in a mismatch between the actions required to attain the original goal, and the actions that are actually performed.

When self-regulation at upper levels of a goal hierarchy has been suspended (for example, by not enough attention being paid to those values), the goals at a lower level become functionally superordinate in guiding overt behaviour and actions

(Carver & Scheier, 1998). That is to say that the guidance of the human system defaults (regresses) to lower levels.

This seemingly technical psychological point has important implications for coaching practice. This is because, typically, the lower-order goals in the hierarchy are not in themselves relatively meaningful in comparison to the higher-order values. In fact, in many cases, the lower-order goals and actions are not pleasant activities at all. They are often made palatable by the notion that reaching those lower-order goal activates the higher-order value.

When we fail to consistently pay attention to the higher-order values in the goal hierarchy system, and overly focus on attaining lower-order goals, the lower-order goals become the superordinate or dominant values. All too frequently individuals place too much attention on their lower-order goals (e.g., revenue building or documenting billing hours), neglecting their higher-order values, and this can easily result in goal dissatisfaction and disengagement.

This framework can give coaches and their coachees useful insights into the psychological mechanics underlying goal dissatisfaction and can be used to develop tools and techniques to help clients in the coaching process. For example, by helping clients purposefully re-focus their attention on more abstract goals, we help them reconnect with their higher-order values. They may end up redefining their goals, and in doing so feel revitalised and re-engaged in the enactment of purposeful positive change.

Putting this all Together

As can be seen from this brief overview of some of the relevant constructs, goal theory has much to offer coaching practice. The question is then, how can we organise all this information in a way that is accessible and useful in coaching practice?

One way of integrating this diverse body of knowledge is to develop a visual representation or model of the various factors related to goal-focused coaching, and such a model is presented in Fig. 2. A word of caution: as with all models, this is only a representation of some possible ways that these factors relate to the coaching process. This model represents my own personal experience and understanding, and I would encourage readers to explore the limitations of this model by reference to their own understanding and coaching experience, and then adapt and extend this model in order to create their own frameworks.

In reference to this model (for more details see Grant, 2013b), which attempts to capture the key aspects involved in the goal-focused approach to coaching and highlights some of the factors that a coach may consider during the coaching engagement, the coaching process is driven by certain needs (represented on the left-hand side of the model). Both individual and contextual/organisational factors play a role in determining the perceived need for coaching, which gives rise to the individual's intentions to participate in the goal selection process. Individual factors
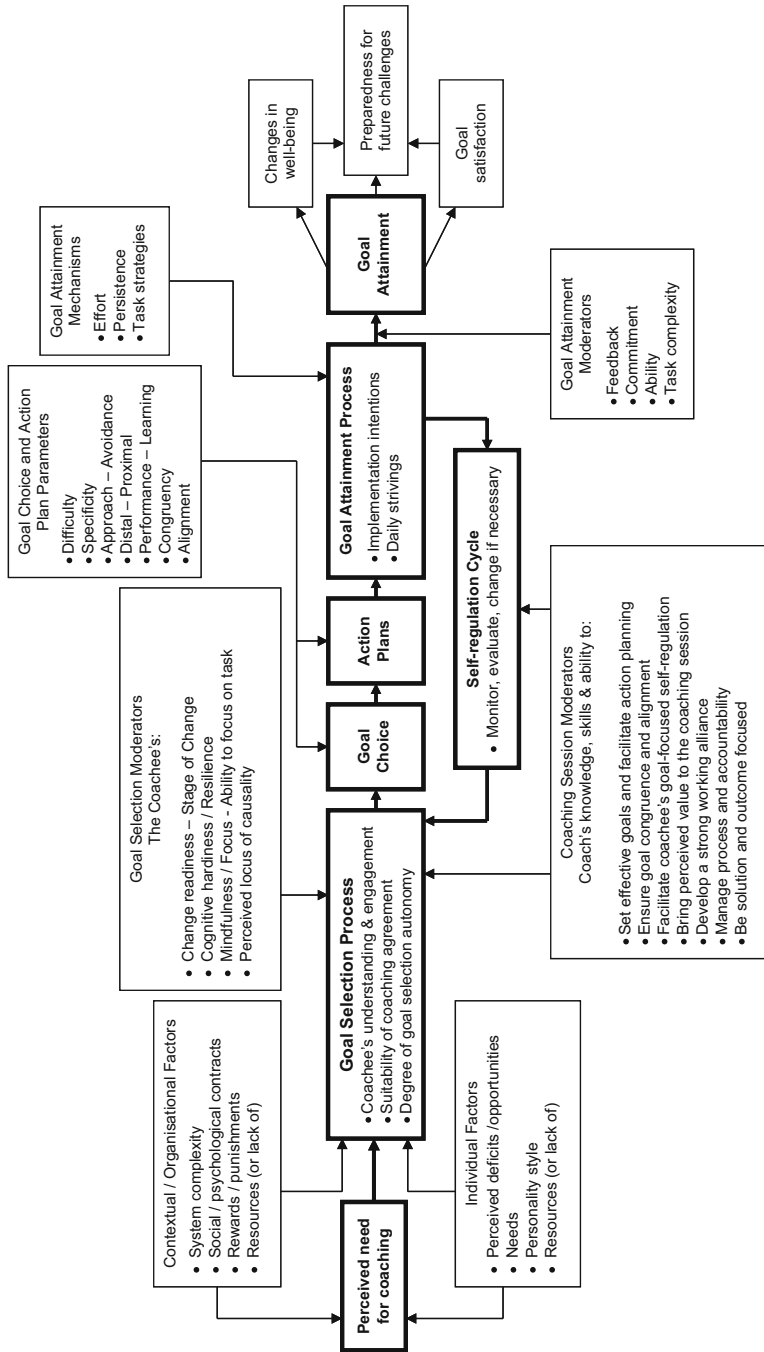
Fig. 2 Integrative model of goal-focused coaching

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at play here include perceived deficits and opportunities, psychological needs, personality style and available resources (or lack thereof). Contextual or organisational factors include system complexity, social and psychological contracts, rewards and punishments, and available resources (or lack thereof).

The goal section process is often not straightforward. Even where coaching has been mandated by an organisation with specific outcomes in mind, the goal-setting process can be convoluted and complex. The rush to seize and set a specific goal too early in the coaching process is a key derailer. Certainly, key issues and broad initial goals should be discussed very early in the coaching process in order to give the conversation direction and purpose, but the coach should also be paying attention to a number of factors during the goal selection process. These include the coachee's understanding of, and engagement with, the coaching process.

Some coachees arrive for their first coaching session with little idea of the nature of coaching. The suitability and clarity of the coaching agreement (be that formal or informal) will play an important role in engaging the coachee in the goal selection process, as will the degree of autonomy the coachee has in goal selection. All the theoretical knowledge about goal theory is of no import, unless the coach can put this theory into action, managing the goal-striving process, holding the coachee accountable and being solution and outcome focused.

Goal Choice and Action Planning

Goal choice and action planning are outcomes of the goal selection process. It is important to note that although the model represents these as linear processes, in reality, these are iterative, with a certain amount of back-and-forth movement between stages. The goal choice and action planning parameters include goal difficulty and specificity, whether the goals are approach or avoidance goals, time framing (distal or proximal), and a performance or learning orientation.

Goal choice is a necessary, but not sufficient part of the coaching process—plans must be developed and enacted. Action planning is the process of developing a systemic means of attaining goals and is particularly important for individuals who have low self-regulatory skills (Kirschenbaum et al., 1981). The coach's role is to develop the coachee's ability to create a realistic and workable plan of action and task strategies that facilitate the goal-striving process and promote effort and persistence in the face of adversity.

One key outcome of successful action planning is the facilitation of the coachee's transition from a *deliberative* mindset to an *implementational* mindset (Gollwitzer, 1999; Heckhausen & Gollwitzer, 1987, see *Motivation and Volition in Coaching* in this Handbook). The deliberative mindset is characterised by a careful weighing of the pros and cons of action and a careful examination of competing goals or courses of action (Carver & Scheier, 1998). The implementational mindset is engaged once the decision to act has been made. This mindset has a determined, focused quality,

and is biased in favour of thinking about success rather than failure—clearly an important point for coaching.

The monitoring and evaluation of actions and the generation of feedback as the coachee moves through the self-regulation cycle is a vital part of the coaching process. However, many people are not naturally self-reflective (Jordan & Troth, 2002) and so the coach may need to find ways to develop action plans that focus on observable, easily monitored behaviours.

What is monitored will, of course, vary according to the coachee's goal and situation. Some behaviours will be easier to monitor than others. Exercise or activity-based actions can be relatively straightforward to monitor. Interpersonal skills or communication patterns in the workplace may be more difficult to monitor, and the coach and coachee may have to be creative in devising means of monitoring and evaluating.

So What? Does Goal Theory Matter in Practice?

Although it is clear from the above discussion that goal theory can inform what happens within coaching sessions and also has great relevance for the broader coaching process, the question arises: does goal theory really matter in actual practice? Is the coach's ability to be goal-focused related to coaching outcomes? This is a key question for the further development of evidence-based coaching practice.

To date, there have been few studies that have sought to explore the importance of goals in the coaching relationship, so I was interested to see which aspect of the coaching relationship was more positively related to coaching outcomes—a goal-focused approach to coaching, or the so-called "common-factors" associated with the person-centred approach (Grant, 2013a). To explore this issue I designed a within-subjects (pre-post) coaching study with which forty-nine mature age coaches (see Grant, 2013b for details) set personal goals and completed a 10 to 12 week, five-session, solution-focused cognitive-behavioural personal coaching program using the GROW model (Whitmore, 1992, see definitions and concepts of coaching in this handbook). Participants were asked to identify their desired outcome for the coaching relationship (i.e., their goal) and then rated the extent to which they had achieved this outcome on a scale from 0% (no attainment) to 100% (complete attainment). The coaching program appeared to be effective and successful in helping the clients reach their desired outcomes for the coaching relationship by significant increases in goal attainment following the coaching program, as well as insight, and significant decreases in anxiety) and stress. No changes in levels of depression or psychological well-being were observed. Referring to the main area of interest, the relationship between coaching successes and the coaching styles used by the coaches showed a significant correlation between goal attainment and a goal-focused coaching skills questionnaire, and also a significant correlation with an adaption of Deci and Ryan's (2005) Perceived Autonomy Support Scale (PASS)

This suggests that both a goal-focused coaching style and a "common factors" person-centred coaching style contribute to coaching success. The correlation between goal attainment and the goal-focused coaching style remained significant even when statistically controlling for a "common factors" person-centred coaching style. These findings strongly suggest that the use of goals in coaching is indeed of practical importance in that the use of a goal-focused coaching style is more effective than a "common factors" person-centred coaching style in the coaching context.

Conclusion

Coaches may see themselves as helping clients explore their values, clarify their intentions, and then working to help them to achieve their personal aspirations. We may use metaphors such as helping clients chart a course, navigate the waters of life or re-author their lived narratives. However, regardless of such semantics, coaching is necessarily a goal-directed activity.

The integrative goal-focused approach to coaching presented in this contribution is a multifaceted methodology for helping individuals and organisations create and sustain change. The key issue for coaches is one of informed flexibility in goal setting. By understanding the different types of goals and their relationship to the process of change, and through facilitating the goal alignment process, professional coaches can work more efficiently with their clients, helping them to achieve the insight and behavioural change that enhances their workplace performance, their professional working lives and, most importantly, their own personal well-being and sense of self.

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Growth- and Security-Orientation in Coaching: Success through Motivational Fit

Andreas M. Böhm, Christina Mühlberger, and Eva Jonas

Case Study: A New Management Task as an Opportunity or a Risk

Imagine a coach who receives two coaching assignments that are very similar to each other. Both Abe and Ben are considered high potentials in their companies but have no management experience yet. Now both are to take on leadership responsibility in the near future, which will serve as a reason for them to seek out a coach. After the first session, it turns out that both clients define the same goal for their coaching, namely to become an authentic leader, where they are respected as persons in authority, but at the same time can maintain a good relationship with their employees.

Apart from their identical starting situation, however, Abe and Ben differ in personality. Abe describes himself as a person who is growth- and success-oriented, always has the opportunities and potential profit in mind when changes occur, cultivates a creative work style, likes to take on new tasks and is also prepared to take risks. Ben, on the other hand, describes himself as security oriented and conscientious, looks at risks or potential losses when changes occur and is careful to work conscientiously, accurately, and with few errors.

The coach pursues a solution and resource-oriented consulting style with the credo to get their clients out of their comfort zone. Due to the parallelism of their goals, the coach chooses similar methods for both clients to achieve their goals. In this way, the coach wants to link the upcoming change with positive associations by

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strengthening its resources and imagining the optimal outcome in order to open it up to the process.

In spite of the parallelism in cause, goal, and methodology of the two clients, they show different reactions after the coaching: Abe is very satisfied with the coaching process, feels empowered to master the upcoming leadership task and the challenges that come with it and describe his coach as understanding and competent. Ben, however, breaks off the coaching process prematurely because he feels that he is moving away from his goal rather than approaching it and his uncertainty has increased. He has the impression that his expressed concerns have not been taken seriously and feels the optimism of the coach is unrealistic. Although the coach tried to support both clients on the way to their goal, this led to success in one case and failure in the other.

Which psychological factors can help to understand such divergent results and how can coaching methods be better selected and applied? Based on the theory of the regulatory focus (Higgins, 1997), we would like to provide food for thought on how coaches can use the knowledge about the motivational orientation of their clients (growth vs. security orientation) to make coaching processes even more flexible.

Growth- and Security-orientation: Two Perspectives on One Goal

Theory of Regulatory Focus

In the case study, we presented two prototypical persons with different self-regulatory strategies, Abe and Ben. These are taken from the *theory of the regulatory focus* (Higgins, 1997), which distinguishes two independent motivational orientations or self-regulatory systems, the profit-seeking *promotion focus* and the loss-avoiding *prevention focus*. These determine how we perceive the world, how and which information we search for and process and which strategies we prefer in pursuing our goals. People with a promotion focus see chances of success in change, are willing to take risks, orient themselves toward personal ideals, and are particularly sensitive to positive and abstract information. This focus is based on the *need for growth*. Persons with a prevention focus try to maintain the status quo, are more likely to see changes as a danger of failure, orient themselves to valid rules and obligations, and are particularly sensitive to negative and concrete information. This focus is based on the *need for security* (Scholer & Higgins, 2012).

With reference to the case study, Abe embodies the prototype of a promoter and Ben that of a preventer. A summary comparison of the two self-regulatory systems can be found in Table 1.

Three important points should be emphasized here (Böhm & Jonas, 2016). First, both focuses can be associated with both advantages and disadvantages (e.g., advantage in prevention: realistic setting of (partial) goals; advantage in promotion:

Table 1 Characteristics of promotion and prevention focus based on empirical findings

	Promotion focus	Prevention focus
Approach	Growth (+1)	Security (0)
Avoid	Standstill (0)	Risk (−1)
Perception of change	Opportunity to be successful	Danger to fail
Objective	Distant maximum and ideal goals	Near minimum and partial goals
Target orientation	Wishes and hopes	Tasks and duties
Preferred language	Abstract (why should goal be achieved?)	Concrete (how is the goal to be achieved?)
Affect after success vs. failure	Joy vs. disappointment	Relaxation vs. tension
Search for information	Positive information	Negative information
Strengths and advantages	Innovation and creativity, openness to change, fast working, optimism	Analytical thinking, conscientiousness, low error operation, realism

optimistic handling of negative experiences; disadvantage in prevention: less openness to change; disadvantage in promotion: setting goals that are difficult to achieve makes their implementation more difficult). Second, the respective dominant focus is only partly determined by the personality and partly by the situation. For example, someone may be a person who is willing to take risks and change in the workplace, while in the private sphere the satisfaction of their security needs is the highest priority. Similarly, the situation itself can activate a certain focus, for example, by appealing in a crisis meeting not to make any further mistakes under any circumstances, otherwise, the mission will be lost (= situational prevention focus). Third, promotion and prevention focus should not be understood as exclusive categories, but as independent dimensions, where one focus does not always have to dominate. A high promotion focus combined with a high prevention focus has even proven to be a success factor for managers (McMullen et al., 2009). One possible reason for this is that it allows them the most flexible self-regulation in dealing with a wide range of complex management tasks.

The Role of Self-regulation in Coaching

Coaching is characterized by the targeted moving from a current to a desired future state. The coaching process serves "[…] to promote result-oriented problem and self-reflection […] to improve the achievement of self-congruent goals […]" (Greif, 2008, p. 59). This means that in coaching we work on goals that should be congruent with the self of the client, i.e., they should fit the values, interests, and needs of the client. The self-congruent goals represent the desired future target or ideal state and an attempt is made to approach this from a current actual state. The target state can concern the fulfilment of a personal wish, the development of a problem solution, the

advancement of personal development, or the bringing about of a change. The psychological construct behind the processes of goal pursuit and achievement is *self-regulation* (Carver & Scheier, 1990). Self-regulation is the motivational control ability for the successful integration of self- and goal-relevant information from the environment (e.g., about one's own needs, feelings, or values) into the self (Baumann and Kuhl, 2013). Successful integration promotes self-determination, i.e., the ability to act in accordance with one's own needs and beliefs, which ultimately leads to intrinsic motivation (Deci & Ryan, 2000). The experience of autonomy underlying this process is in turn essential for the coaching process (Jonas et al., 2017).

Since in coaching, moving from a current to a desired state is elementary, coaching can be understood as a process of change (Behrendt, 2012). The client's motivation for change is an important success factor (Graßmann & Schermuly, 2016). Therefore, it could be concluded that coaching is a more appropriate form of consulting for promoters who are open to change anyway than for preventers who would rather maintain the status quo. If this were the case, how could coaches then elicit a willingness in preventers to open to change processes?

Motivational Congruence as the Key to Self-determined Goal Pursuit

If goal-oriented action in coaching is made possible by successful self-regulation, but people differ in their self-regulatory strategies, it should be possible to take up these strategies in coaching in order to enable change and growth in a wide variety of personalities. Coaches play an essential role in shaping the individual change processes, as they accompany their clients through the self-regulatory process toward the achievement of goals (Grant, 2003) and can actively support them through the targeted use of language and methods. In doing so, they can use the effect of regulatory fit, which will be explained in the next section.

The Regulatory Fit or the Feeling of Feeling Right

The prevention-oriented client Ben from our initial example, whose need for security was the main focus, broke off the coaching process, which was very much aimed at growth. He should think about all his hopes and visions and reflect on the opportunities offered by the new task. The passing of hurdles and risks triggered an inner resistance in Ben and the goal seemed even more unattainable. Here there was a lack of fit between Ben's need for security and the growth-oriented approach of the coaching, which became increasingly noticeable to him in the course of the coaching. Although he was initially looking forward to the planned assumption of

a management role, as it suited his desire to be given more responsibility in the company in the medium term, the initial joy about the promotion quickly gave way to a fear of change and the risks involved. This confronted him with the following questions: What are my responsibilities as a leader? What if I am not accepted by the team as a manager? What risks and obstacles need to be considered?

Translated into the language of the theory of regulatory focus, the prevention-oriented client Ben is provided with promotion-oriented strategies or methods for achieving goals that cannot satisfy his need for security and risk minimization. Self-regulation fails because the information from the coaching cannot be integrated into the self. The target discrepancy remains. There is a lack of *regulatory fit* (Higgins, 2005).

For promotion-oriented client Abe, this regulatory fit is given. He visualizes the chances and opportunities that could result from the management task and thinks little about what could stand in his way. He sees the coming months as a challenge that he must master and grow with. The coach's approach is congruent with his motivational orientation toward personal growth, he can integrate this information well into his own self, the discrepancy between goals appear to be controllable and he feels capable of acting. The regulatory fit effect results from the correspondence of the task requirements of the situation with the regulatory focus of a person (Higgins, 2005). This creates a so-called feeling of *feeling right*, which promotes successful self-regulation.

If successful self-regulation is achieved, this should lead to an activation of the behavioral approach system (BAS), a motivational system that initiates goal-oriented behavior. As a result, people become determined to tackle their goals, they feel strong and full of energy. In the case of a lack of regulatory fit and thus a failure of self-regulation, the behavioral inhibition system (BIS) should be activated. This is a motivational system that triggers insecurity and fear and allows the negative effect to be fixed. This can trigger an anxiety-like state of disorientation and paralysis in the actor (cf. Jonas et al., 2014; Kuhl & Kaschel, 2004). Consequently, they might react with dysfunctional behavior to overcome the inhibition and experience themselves as capable of action again, and for example, rush to break off coaching. The regulatory fit can thus be crucial in bringing people into the activating state of BAS and thereby enabling their ability to act regarding their coaching goals.

Empirical Findings on the Effect of Regulatory Fit

Based on numerous studies on regulatory fit, valuable conclusions can be drawn for the design of coaching processes. For example, individuals are more engaged and motivated in an activity if it corresponds to their motivational orientation (Higgins, 2005). For promoters, this meant that their actions were geared toward maximizing profits, whereas for preventers they were geared toward minimizing losses. Accordingly, preventers were more likely to be persuaded to initiate a particular action if they had previously been given security-oriented arguments, whereas promoters

were more likely to be persuaded to initiate growth-oriented arguments (Quinn & Olson, 2011).

Other important implications arise from the higher sensitivity of promoters for positive information and of preventers for negative information (Higgins, 1997). For example, the motivation of promoters could be increased if they were given positive feedback on successful work steps, whereas this was successful for preventers if the feedback related to mistakes made or partial goals not achieved (Van Dijk & Kluger, 2004). In addition to the regulatory focus, the task type can also have a situational influence on how feedback is handled. If a person works on a task that involves precise error detection (prevention), negative feedback has a motivational and performance-enhancing effect. Positive feedback, on the other hand, has this effect when the task is to generate new ideas (promotion) (Van Dijk & Kluger, 2011). A series of studies on change processes showed that employees with a prevention focus showed greater adaptation and commitment in a change process when this was communicated by the manager in a prevention-oriented manner, i.e., with a focus on avoiding possible mistakes (Petrou et al., 2013).

Among the few research studies that have dealt with the regulatory focus in coaching so far are those by Sue-Chan et al. (2012), which examined the influence of the coach's behavioral orientation (promotion vs. prevention) on the outcome of the coaching process. While the prevention coach was instructed to investigate the mistakes made and problems encountered, the promotion coach should aim to highlight partial successes and further improvement possibilities. In accordance with the regulatory fit hypothesis, it was shown that clients who were careful to avoid mistakes (prevention feature) and who also regarded their own personality traits as rather unchangeable benefited more from a prevention-oriented coach.

Further research supports the findings that problem-oriented coaching can also lead to success and that solution-oriented coaching can even have negative effects in some cases. For example, solution-oriented coaching to reduce learning delay behavior only showed the desired success with those persons whose personality resembled that of promoters. People whose personality was similar to that of pre-venters even reported more postponement behavior after the solution-oriented coaching. This could be explained by the feeling that their goals felt more foreign than self-determined, which suggests a failed self-regulation (Mühlberger, Mühlberger, et al., 2017). In another study, Grant and O'Connor (2010) compared a solution-focused coaching process with a problem-focused coaching process: While in the former the client was supported in generating possible solutions to achieve the goal, problem-focused coaching concentrated on elaborating the exact reasons for the problem to be solved. It was shown that not only the solution-oriented but also the problem-oriented process can have positive effects. Thus, through coaching, the negative effect could be reduced and the self-efficacy expectation increased. Talking about problems and worries can have a cathartic effect on some people, and preventing them from even alienating from the goal.

Empirical Studies to Create a Regulatory Fit in Coaching

Although valuable implications for the coaching context can be derived from the above studies, there is still a lack of research on the regulatory fit in coaching. Applied to the coaching context, the existence of a regulatory fit means that the discrepancy between the actual and the target state and the associated change "feels right" to the client, which should have a positive effect on their motivation for action. A coach can create this effect, for example, by adapting their methodology, exercises, and language to the preferred strategies of their clients. In a study on the preference for coaches, Mühlberger, Böhm, et al. (2017) found that a promoter preferred a coach whose working style was described as promotion-oriented (e.g., creative working style, use of new, unconventional methods, and motivating clients to rise above themselves). Preventers, on the other hand, preferred coaches whose working style was similar to that of a preventer (e.g., reliable, conscientious working methods, use of established, recognized methods, responding to concerns, and fears). In the following section, we present three studies in which we provoked the regulatory fit by editing coaching exercises in two different versions (promotion and prevention version) (for a detailed overview, see Böhm, 2018).

In the first study, we investigated how *target-relevant action strategies* that fit the regulatory focus affect self-efficacy expectations and intrinsic motivation to pursue goals. Participants were asked to define their personal goals according to SMART criteria (see chapter "Coaching Definitions and Concepts" in this volume) before being randomly divided into two groups. The promotion exercise should list and describe action strategies that were necessary to achieve the goal. The prevention exercise should describe behavior that had to be avoided at all costs to achieve the goal. The regulatory fit could be successfully demonstrated. If the coaching exercise matched the focus of the participants, they subsequently showed an increased expectation of self-efficacy regarding their goal. Moreover, the regulatory fit led to an increase in intrinsic target motivation, which is particularly relevant because, as described at the beginning, successful self-regulation means acting in accordance with one's own needs and beliefs (= experience of autonomy) and this consequently promotes intrinsic motivation, which is essential in coaching (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Jonas et al., 2017).

In a second study, we examined how the *target-relevant resources that* fit the regulatory focus affect the self-efficacy expectation with regard to the pursuit of objectives. Again, the participants were randomly divided into two different exercise versions and were then asked to work on one page in each group, listing different areas of life (social environment, leisure, work, family, etc.). While in the promotion exercise energy sources should be identified in these areas of life, in the prevention exercise energy consumers should be identified. Here, too, the regulatory fit effect led to the fact that even one week after the intervention, the participants indicated a higher self-efficacy expectation regarding their goal than people who had completed an unsuitable exercise. Since this effect occurred particularly among preventers, we can conclude that raising awareness of potential target obstacles is a more effective

way of giving security-oriented persons a sense of control over their actions than focusing on target-oriented resources.

In the third study, we used the insight that promoters tend to follow abstract and preventers tend to follow concrete thought patterns (see also Scholer & Higgins, 2012) and examined how they fit with the feeling of *feeling-right* and the motivation to act with regard to the goal was shown. Persons assigned to the promotion exercise should reflect on their goal on an abstract level by answering some "why" questions (initial question: Why do you want to achieve your goal?). Persons with the prevention exercise were given the task of operationalizing their goal by answering increasingly concrete "how" questions (initial question: how do you want to achieve your goal?). Here, too, it was shown that the feeling of *feeling-right* with regard to the target, which is typical for the regulatory fit, was achieved, which was particularly evident in the case of preventers. Furthermore, the relevance of regulatory fit for the motivation to act was also shown. For example, the time of target initiation was set much earlier if the exercise fitted the regulatory focus than if it did not. Fitting effects were also shown in one of our supplementary studies. For example, the processing of an abstract exercise led to a higher subjective achievement of objectives after coaching than the processing of a concrete exercise (Böhm, 2018; Mühlberger et al., 2020).

Of course, an experienced coach will seldom, as in our experimental setting, rely exclusively on promotion or prevention exercises since many established methods are characterized by shares of both focuses anyway. Nevertheless, the studies suggest that the coach, by consciously choosing congruent coaching methods, can create a situation for the client that enables successful self-regulation and makes the client feel motivated and capable of acting with regard to his or her goal. Especially if the coach feels an inhibition or resistance from their client during the process, they can adapt their interventions specifically and flexibly to the current perceived motivational orientation of the client. This again underlines the important role of the coach in guiding the client through the self-regulatory process toward the achievement of objectives.

Conclusion and Practical Transfer

Coaching is a growth process through which clients are accompanied by coaches to achieve a desired target state. However, moving toward the future state means moving away from a previous state. This abandonment is inevitably accompanied by a certain degree of unpredictability and un-plannability. While some people see this challenge as an opportunity, for others it is precisely this that represents a threatening situation. For this reason, coaching should be thought of as a growth process, but never without the security aspect. Finally, successful self-regulation and thus self-determined growth, especially for preventers, can only be made possible once uncertainty has been removed. In addition to setting self-congruent goals (Greif, 2008), it is therefore just as important to make the entire coaching process

congruent for the client by adapting methods and exercises to the motivational orientation of the client.

However, how can coaches know which regulatory focus underlies the motivation of his or her client? A reliable, albeit costly, option is the integration of diagnostic instruments into the coaching process (e.g., Keller & Bless, 2006). However, although the predominant focus of the client's personality can be determined, it is not possible to determine which focus is activated at any given moment. This bears the danger of assigning one's counterpart to an unchangeable category and underestimating the power of the situation. In addition, it is, therefore, necessary to use established interview techniques combined with an increased sensitivity for certain keywords or statements (e.g., for promoters: success, growth, opportunity, possibility, ideal, wish, hope, long-term; for preventers: Failure, loss, security, duty, risk, rules, regulation, status quo, uncontrollability, errors, short-term; see also Table 1). These could be provoked specifically in coaching, for example, by asking clients to write down the first five associations regarding their goal. Of course, one focus does not necessarily dominate every person and every situation, since in many cases both focuses can be similarly strong. If, however, there is neither a diagnostic nor a reliable subjective assessment of the focus, it would be useful to use both communication channels (e.g., through a SWOT analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats).

Both motivational orientations can be accompanied by advantages and disadvantages. Therefore, the advantages of both should be used specifically in coaching. Promoters should be made aware of the added value of sub-targets and milestones, as they tend to set themselves ambitious targets and risk losing sight of them when a new target seems more attractive. When dealing with prevention-oriented clients, on the other hand, it is important not to forget not only the security aspect but also the growth aspect. It is advisable to proceed in two phases by first identifying obstacles and risks before focusing on the opportunities and possibilities. If the need for security is satisfied in a first step, successful self-regulation can lead to a *motivational re-orientation* in a second step and the need for growth comes to the fore.

So how would Ben from our initial example have reacted if he had been given the opportunity to list all those things that could potentially go wrong or stand in the way of his goal? He might then have been more likely to feel that his concerns and perceived risks (and thus his need for security) were being taken seriously and could have opened himself up to the upcoming change.

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Health in Coaching

Eva Bamberg and Sylvie Vincent-Höper

Case Study

Alfie is on a six-month probationary period after changing jobs. After only a few weeks, he was informed that his employment contract might not be extended due to his performance.

Alfie has the impression that his achievements are not recognized. He does not understand why his performance is considered poor. In the coaching process, he wants to clarify how he can address the situation. During the coaching process, Alfie also raises a health issue. He has been so worried that his sleep has been affected. He is hardly able to relax. He has stopped most of his sporting activities and has increased the amount he smokes and drinks. Moreover, he neglects friends and family relationships.

The example illustrates that the coaching process often deals with questions of employment that are directly or indirectly related to health. Even where health is not a key factor or coaching goal, attention should be paid to the health of the client.

The Concept of Health

In everyday life, the statement "*I am healthy*" indicates first and foremost that the person concerned is not suffering from any illnesses. Health is understood as the absence of—mainly physical—illness. However, *I am healthy* may also mean: I am *fine and I feel good*. This refers to a state of well-being that is determined somatically, psychologically, and socially, and is often considered to be our desirable state.

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There are also different perspectives in the scientific discussions on health: The traditional biomedical model, which focuses less on health and more on disease, has been widely criticized in the past. According to the biopsychosocial model, health has a social, psychological, and behavioral dimension in addition to the physical one. This is reflected in the World Health Organization definition of health. Health is "*a state of complete physical and mental well-being which results when disease-free people live in harmony with their environment and with one another*" (World Health Organization, 1986, p. 7).

The World Health Organization's definition is criticized for making health a utopia. However, it is worth noting that the definition refers to a positive understanding of health. In practical measures and in health research, this perspective has been accompanied by a paradigm shift: Not only the causes of disease, but also about factors that keep people healthy or promote health are relevant. These ideas put resources and resource activation in the foreground. An example is Antonovsky's model *Sense of Coherence* (Antonovsky, 1987).

Focusing on factors that promote health implies that the wider processes which promote health are also considered. Health becomes an active process, to be continuously cultivated in a dynamic process between the individual and the environment. Ducki and Greiner (1992) saw health as a development of the ability to act. In this context, capacity for action refers to the ability to form long-term goals, the ability to adapt and change, and the ability to integrate physical processes and actions.

In the past, the concept of health was related to individuals in the first line. In addition, models of Public Health include biological, technical, and social systems. These approaches focus on the conditions in the system that create healthy members of the respective system. Health is not only seen as a characteristic or process relating to the individuals. Several issues reveal this "systems focus": for example, *Healthy City* or *Healthy Company*.

The Importance of Health in the Coaching Process

The understanding of health discussed above has several consequences for coaching. A distinction can be made between coaching, in which the promotion of health is one of the explicit goals, and coaching, in which only health-related implications are given but no corresponding goals are developed.

Health-related implications can arise in many situations, for example, when the client fails in developing a solution to his problem. If the coaching process remains unsuccessful, or has undesirable side effects, adverse effects on health and well-being may result. But even if the intended goal is achieved in the coaching process, adverse effects on health are possible. For example, a desired career jump could be associated with increased stress.

In many cases, however, achieving coaching goals will have positive consequences for health. In many cases, professional success will increase life satisfaction

and thus wellbeing. But in all coaching interventions negative and positive health effects should be considered.

It is also possible that health is an explicit object. The latter is the case with *health coaching* (HC). The goal of HC is to promote wellbeing and the achievement of health-related goals (Greif, 2011). There is a close connection to stress management coaching, which is a special form of health coaching aimed at improving stress management.

The concept of health discussed above has some consequences for HC:

- HC pursues a positive perspective where resource activation has a high priority.
- HC takes into account the multidimensionality of the concept of health and considers the somatic, psychological, and social levels.
- HC considers health as a process.
- HC recognizes the capacity for action of the individual.
- HC can be supported by social systems.

Irrespective of whether health is implicitly or explicitly considered in the coaching process, it is helpful to understand the occupational and health psychology models which can inform practice.

Systematization of Health Determinants

Based on occupational psychological models (see, for example, Bamberg et al., 2003), which underline the process character of health, we distinguish between condition-related and personal factors in the influencing factors of health (see Fig. 1).

The *condition-related factors* can be separated into demands and (condition-related) resources. Demands, for example social demands, are those factors that may exceed the human capacity to act and may have potentially negative effects on health Resources, such as social support, are factors that support the handling of demands,. With regard to *personal factors, a* distinction is made between risk factors and (personal) resources. Risk factors increase the probability of inadequate
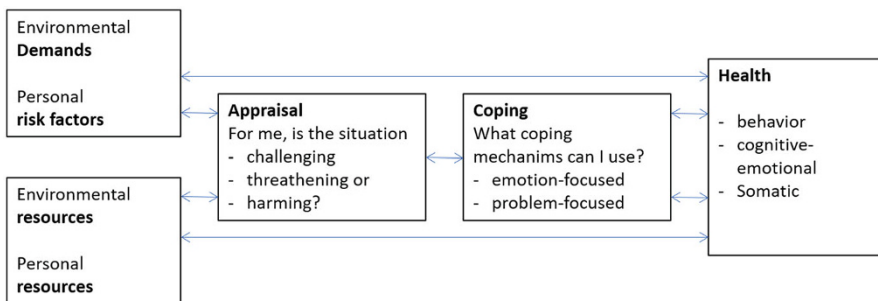
Fig. 1 Factors influencing health (Bamberg et al., 2003)
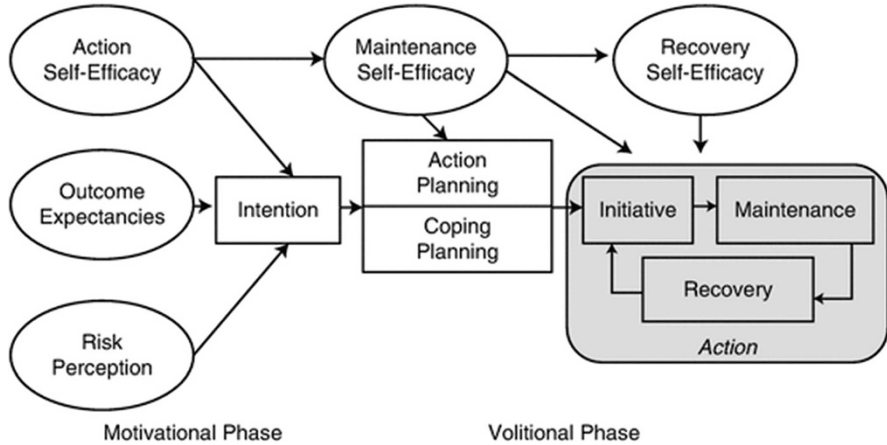
Fig. 2 Social-cognitive process model (Schwarzer, 2008, p. 6)

strategies for dealing with stress. This includes, for example, self-endangering work behavior (Dettmers et al., 2016). Important personal resources include self-efficacy and coherence. Evaluation and coping processes mediate between stresses, risk factors, and resources on the one hand and health on the other.

Schwarzer's model (2008) is helpful for systematizing the factors that play a role in the context of evaluation and coping processes. The model sees health behavior as a process in which several influencing factors play a role. These include risk perception (i.e., the assessment of health hazards), outcome expectancies (i.e., the assessment of whether health can be influenced), and self-efficacy (i.e., the assessment of the extent to which one's own actions contribute to intended goals). Barriers that could influence the execution of actions or the success of actions are also important. Depending on these factors, the formation of an action intention, the planning and execution of action takes place. Schwarzer's model (cf. Fig. 2) is a good complement to the occupational psychology model mentioned above. It can serve as a basis for deriving the factors that are important for health behavior.

The models are suitable for HC, because with their help, health-related implications can be clarified for other coaching topics. For example, how does an intended improvement of the professional position change demands and resources? Are adequate coping strategies available? Are risks known? What is the assessment of the client's competence to act?

The models can be used to analyze situations that have potentially negative effects on health. In a reflexive process, it is thus possible to find suitable strategies for changing potentially damaging situations. It can be applied at the *condition-related* level. Structural changes within the work area can be introduced to reduce work-related stress (e.g., by realistically limiting the workload, buffering high-stress phases with the help of subsequent short, quieter work phases, improving work design) and to strengthen social resources (e.g., better social support within the team, better information flow, clear responsibilities, and roles).

Furthermore, *the personal* level can be addressed, e.g. through relaxation methods (progressive muscle relaxation, autogenic training, biofeedback), time management (optimizing one's own working methods and organization, setting priorities), training of social skills (learning to say no), and sporting activities. Further focuses are appraisal and coping processes, e.g., through relaxation and cognitive reinterpretation.

The above-mentioned health psychological model directs attention to the assessment of health-related risks and self-efficacy and takes planning processes into account. Based on the models, the orientation on resources can also be concretized. The following questions can be used for this purpose: Who or what supports you in being able to better deal with stress? Have similar situations been successfully mastered in the past? What helped? What feels right?

Scientific evaluation studies have shown that the health-promoting effect is greatest when both the condition level and the person level are simultaneously addressed.

The explicit and implicit promotion of health takes place in coaching with the usual methods. However, several interventions can support the coaching process.

Interventions to Support the Coaching Process

Regardless of where health-related coaching is applied, whether it is about reducing workloads or changing health behavior—in all cases, the development of a decision to change behavior is not enough. Rather, what is needed is a medium- to long-term process involving changes in behavior and attitudes, in which stagnation and setbacks are possible. An improvement in health in individual coaching sessions is therefore only possible to a limited extent. Supporting methods, which are accompanied in the coaching process, are to be used.

Tasks and homework are quite common in coaching. For the promotion of health, they can have different functions, such as supporting the analysis of the initial situation, improving self-perception, testing behavioral alternatives, or practicing new behavior. Homework offers an opportunity to make new experiences. Some short interventions are well suited for this use. If, for example, structural changes within the area of work or work organization, such as changes in the flow of information, or if person-related relaxation exercises or sports activities are being tested, then the corresponding processes can be started in coaching sessions and continued outside the sessions. It is also possible that these processes are prepared and followed up in the coaching sessions and carried out by the clients in the time between the sessions. One technique to support the practical implementation of the behavioral changes intended by the client is that of *telephone shadowing*. Here the coach supports the client by speaking on the telephone directly after a relevant situation or shortly before such a situation (Greif, 2008). This serves to help clients overcome internal and external barriers to planned changes in behavior.

Interventions with Conditional Objectives

Although a change in the conditions for action can be highly relevant for the promotion of health, condition-based objectives in the coaching process are comparatively rare. One example is interventions that relate to *condition-based coping*. These interventions are intended to work out how impairing conditions for action can be changed. It is therefore a matter of reducing demands and promoting condition-based resources. Methods of coping with conditions and problems have always been of great importance in stress management training. They have recently experienced a renaissance under the term *job crafting*.

The term *Job Crafting* describes the active reshaping and redesigning of one's own work beyond the formal job description. In the process, social relationships, the scope and quality of work activity, and one's own image of the importance of work can be changed (Tims & Bakker, 2010; Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). Changing one's own tasks or the content of one's work can be related to reducing demands of work as well as increasing resources and challenging requirements. Social relationships can be changed, for example, by actively seeking support from colleagues and superiors. Concrete measures that can be implemented to increase these resources include asking the supervisor for feedback, finding ways to learn new things at work, or taking the initiative if an interesting project is to be worked on. In a long-term study, Tims et al. (2013) show that workers who use job crafting activities to increase their resources have more social and structural resources than workers who do not.

Interventions with Personal Objectives

Interventions with personal objectives have been developed primarily on the basis of positive psychology, health psychology, and approaches to (self) leadership. A basic assumption of *positive psychology* is that health development is possible by *promoting personal strengths*. Seligman et al. (2005) mention the following exercises as examples:

- Letters of thanks: Participants write a letter of thanks every day for a week. The letter was to be addressed to a particularly friendly person who had not been thanked appropriately before.
- Three good things in life: The participants write down every day for a week three things that went well that day. They write down the reasons for this.
- You at your best: Participants write about a phase in their lives when they were able to show themselves from their best side. For a week, they check their transcripts daily and reflect on the personal strengths that played a role in their work.

- Personal strengths: A questionnaire was used to determine personal strengths. The participants practice the strengths that proved to be particularly pronounced in the questionnaire and try them out in new situations.

The interventions were practiced for one week and proved to be mostly effective. For longer-term effects, it was important to what extent the participants continued the exercises after the exercise week. The meta-analysis of Sin and Lyubomirsky (2009) also shows significant effects of interventions of positive psychology. Further meta-analyses were conducted by Bolier et al. (2013) and by White et al. (2019).

Positive Occupational Health Psychology was developed for the world of work. The interventions are oriented toward development and change (Luthans, 2002; Bakker & Derks, 2010, p. 199). Examples are work engagement or activation of resources. Popular are interventions on so-called *psychological capital*, which can be characterized by the factors self-efficacy, optimism, hope, and resilience (psychological resistance) (Luthans et al., 2005). Luthans et al. (2008) developed a web-based training on Psychological Capital. It consisted of two 45-minute sessions. In the first session, information was provided on the positive effects of resilience and self-efficacy. The participants should then relate this information to their work situation. They should practice self-reflection with regard to resilience and self-efficacy and relate it to their work situation. Future application possibilities were discussed. The second session was similarly structured: This was mainly about hope and optimism in the context of challenging goals and activities. Studies on Positive Occupational Health Psychology point to the positive effects of this approach. However, critics stress that simple positive thinking should be avoided and that a balanced assessment of resources, demands, and risk factors is important.

Another intervention focuses on *health-related self-management* (Franke et al., 2011; Klug et al., 2019). Health-related self-management operates at four levels:

- Health-related mindfulness.

  – Health-related mindfulness refers to the awareness of one's own state of health and personal stress level as well as the perception of health warning signals (e.g., concentration problems, nervousness, irritability, palpitations, sweating, and sleep disorders). The central question that arises for the HC is: *How attentive are you to changes in your state of health?*

- Health prevalence.

  – Health prevalence refers to the importance of one's own health in comparison to other values (e.g., success). From the individual importance of health follows the motivation to change one's own behavior in a health-promoting way. The central question that arises for the HC is: *How important is your health to you?*

- Health-related self-efficacy expectations.

  – Health-related self-efficacy involves knowing about health-promoting behavior and measures and the confidence to be able to implement them. The central

question that arises for the HC is: *Do you know what measures you can take to promote your health?*

- Health behavior.
  - Health behavior refers to the concrete implementation of person and condition-related measures, i.e., health promoting behavior. The central question that arises for the HC is: *Do you implement health promotion measures?*

Conclusion

Numerous methods are suitable for promoting health through coaching. The interventions have been evaluated, with different indications of the effectiveness of different measures. Useful concepts and methods have been developed for the HC. However, there is still no single concept or model developed by and for the actors in the field. Rather, those dealing with the topic are invited to compile the knowledge and methods from different subject areas. This bears the danger of an eclectic approach, but also offers the possibility of a creative design of the coaching process. The starting conditions for promoting health through coaching could be improved by addressing the following problem areas:

1. Coaching can have conflicting effects. For example, career promotion can have negative health effects. How can the coach and client deal with it? How can contradictory effects be avoided?
2. Positive Psychology can offer a realistic self-assessment and promote well-being through awareness and where the client directs their attention. Where is the line between positive thinking and lack of reflection?
3. Health coaching, focuses on behavioral prevention, with only a few relationship strategies. Why is this the case?

It should be recognized that health coaching is more likely to influence the already healthy client (Bamberg et al., 2011). Working with a client on how to promote resources and how to reduce demands is only possible and meaningful if there are appropriate options. Coaching is aimed at a comparatively privileged group of highly qualified people. A wide range of employees is not included. We are not able to answer relevant questions: What interventions can be used to help cashiers at supermarket checkouts, assembly workers, or employees in call centers? Therefore, a key priority is to develop and evaluate health-oriented interventions and HC for employees in low-skilled jobs. First attempts give credit to the notion that HC is a promising approach for promoting health of this target group (Busch et al., 2017).

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Health Coaching Research

Irina Todorova

Introduction

Health coaching supports people's efforts to change health-related behaviors, pre-vent illness, and deal with symptoms and challenges of illness. This form of health coaching is usually termed "patient coaching" since most people who seek health coaching are dealing with chronic health conditions; however, we should not underestimate the potential role of coaching in the prevention of disease. The term "health coaching" will be used in this chapter, to integrate other terms which are available such as "health and wellness coaching", "wellness coaching", "personal health coaching" (see also chapter: "Health in Coaching"). In 2013 Wolever and colleagues conducted a systematic literature review with the purpose of identifying existing definitions and conceptualizations of health coaching (Wolever et al., 2013). They concluded that though health coaching includes diverse approaches, there is some consensus in the literature about what are its main features. The definition which emerged from this review and which is currently most widely used is that health and wellness coaching is:

> a patient-centered approach wherein patients at least partially determine their goals, use self-discovery or active learning processes together with content education to work toward their goals, and self-monitor behaviors to increase accountability, all within the context of an interpersonal relationship with a coach. The coach is a healthcare professional trained in behavior change theory, motivational strategies, and communication techniques, which are used to assist patients to develop intrinsic motivation and obtain skills to create sustainable change for improved health and well-being (Wolever et al., 2013, p. 52).

Coaching patients is a field that has a long history both in terms of research and practice. A related area—coaching in healthcare more broadly—includes coaching

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healthcare providers such as physicians, nurses, medical residents, and healthcare leaders (Wolever et al., 2017). Several recent studies illustrate the potential for coaching to reduce burnout (see chapter: "Burnout Prevention"), and physicians' intentions to leave the profession (Dyrbye et al., 2019; McGonagle et al., 2020).

Health coaching emerged primarily in response to the increasing prevalence of chronic illnesses, and the understanding of the psychological, behavioral, and relational dimensions of these illnesses. The National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion in the USA defines chronic disease as one which lasts a year or more, requires medical management, or limits activities of daily living (National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention, 2020). The Center identifies seven main chronic diseases, which also contribute highly to mortality risk, and stresses the role of lifestyle in preventing and ameliorating these conditions—reducing tobacco use, improving nutrition, increasing physical activity, and reducing alcohol consumption. Interventions based on health coaching principles have been shown to have a significant potential to support people in these behavioral changes as well as in improving their health status.

Health and Well-being Outcomes of Health Coaching

The impact of health coaching has been studied extensively over the past decade, and overall has illustrated the important role it could have in maintaining and improving health and well-being. An early integrative review of research in health coaching was published a decade ago and included only 15 articles in line with the inclusion criteria (Olsen & Nesbitt, 2010). The healthy lifestyle behaviors which were assessed in the reviewed publications included nutritious diet, increased physical activity (PA), weight management, medication adherence, and others; findings indicated that coaching interventions showed improvement in the target behaviors in 40% of the reviewed studies.

The key systematic review mentioned earlier was conducted a few years later by Wolever et al. (2013). It called for a unified definition of health coaching in future research, in order to allow for a comparison of research findings on its effectiveness (as a practice which is "patient-centered and incorporating patient-determined goals, self-discovery processes, accountability mechanisms, and content information, in the context of an ongoing helping relationship", p. 53). The review included 284 full-text articles which fit the inclusion criteria, most of which were empirical, others were expert opinions on the characteristics of health coaching. This review gave the authors a base for recommendations for future research, which include describing the coaching methods and components used in the study, the theoretical framework which informs the coaching, the duration of the coaching engagement and number of sessions provided, and the professions and training of the coaches.

Since then, empirical research on the effectiveness of health coaching has blossomed. From the two editions of the compendium on health coaching (Sforzo et al., 2018, 2020) we can see the rapid growth in the number of publications. Sforzo

et al. (2018) used the definition offered by Wolever and colleagues to select publications in the field of health coaching and found 219 articles (of which 150 were empirical) meeting the inclusion criteria published between 1989 and 2017 in the English language. Two years later an Addendum to the compendium was published (Sforzo et al., 2020), in which the authors identified an additional 104 articles, of which 81 are empirical, just within these two years. More recently, a systematic review of health coaching research in chronic disease was published; it selected only randomized control trials (RCTs) or quasi-experimental designs (Kivelä et al., 2014). Another review that will select RCTs comparing health coaching to usual care or other types of interventions is currently being planned (Yang et al., 2020). Other recent systematic reviews have chosen specific topics and inclusion criteria, such as focusing on health coaching in the field of rehabilitation and prevention (Dejonghe et al., 2017); effects of health coaching on PA (Oliveira et al., 2017); on behavior change for adults with cardiovascular risk factors (An & Song, 2020) and the role of the employed modality on coaching outcomes (Singh et al., 2020b).

The following is not meant to be an exhaustive review of the literature, but rather to highlight the main and diverse areas of study and trends, by providing several examples of recently published research from the past decade.

Health Status and Indicators of Physical Health

Health coaching is being implemented as a supportive practice for people with chronic health conditions such as obesity, diabetes, heart disease, hypertension, high cholesterol, and to some extent cancer. A significant number of studies are also assessing the role of health coaching in the category which can be identified as "wellness" which can be described as health coaching for prevention of chronic disease, reduction of health risk behaviors such as smoking cessation and stress management as well as improving health-promoting behaviors. These studies assess a wide variety of coaching outcomes, including symptoms, health status, physiological, psychosocial, and behavioral indicators, and usually a combination of these. A report by the UK The Evidence Center in 2014 reviewed 275 studies and concluded that the evidence for improvement of health status (as indicated by blood pressure, blood glucose control, cholesterol, and weight loss) was mixed, as overall approximately one-third of the reviews and the randomized clinical trials showed improvement (The Evidence Center, 2014).

Health coaching in diabetes and pre-diabetes is one of the most often studied areas. Common indicators for control of the condition are glycosylated hemoglobin (HbA1c); body mass index (BMI), waist circumference, and diabetes medical symptoms are also evaluated. Many recent studies have found a positive impact of health coaching on improving glycemic control (as indicated by reducing HbA1c) through promoting self-management of blood glucose levels, PA, and diet. Both reviews by Sforzo et al. conclude that the majority of studies (78% and 85%

respectively) find a positive impact of health coaching on levels of HbA1c (Sforzo et al., 2018, 2020). A meta-analysis of randomized controlled trials came to a similar conclusion, finding that glycemic control was improved after coaching engagements ranging from less than 3 months to 18 months (Pirbaglou et al., 2018). Thus, the overall conclusion is that health coaching is a promising support intervention for behavior changes leading to improvements in biological markers of diabetes. When compared with a health education intervention, health coaching emerged as more successful in achieving glycemic control (Cinar & Schou, 2014).

In recent years, the interest in the role of health coaching for managing obesity has grown significantly, becoming the most frequently studied condition in health coaching (Sforzo et al., 2020). The majority of the studies focusing on obesity and overweight, published between 1989 and 2016, 87% find that health coaching leads to a reduction in weight, or BMI (Sforzo et al., 2018); and 74% of studies published between 2016 and 2019 find the same (Sforzo et al., 2020). A retrospective cohort study evaluated a large sample of N = 500 participants in a high-intensity lifestyle intervention program based on weekly group coaching sessions. It illustrated significant weight loss, which was a function of the length of participation in the program, reaching 20.7% loss of initial body weight for the group which participated longest in the program—for 13–24 months (Gotthelf et al., 2018). Significant improvements were also observed in lipid profiles, and there were some positive changes in blood pressure and fasting glucose. A significant number of patients were able to decrease their medication use for dyslipidemia, hypertension, and diabetes.

Maintaining the achieved weight loss is of great importance, thus some studies aim to track the impact of coaching over longer periods of time. The evidence for sustainable weight loss with the support of different forms of health coaching is mixed. For example, Godino et al. (2016) are one of the few teams who tracked weight over 2 years through an RCT design and an intervention based on mobile technology as well as access to a health coach (Godino et al., 2016). They found significant weight loss for the young adults in the intervention group compared to the control group up to 12 months, however, after that the difference between the two groups was no longer significant.

Health Behaviors

As health coaching's framework is most often based on behavioral change and lifestyle change, uptake and change in health behaviors are frequently used as an indicator of the efficacy of coaching. These are behaviors that could have health-promoting effects for a range of chronic conditions (smoking, PA, healthy diet, medication adherence, overall self-care). Such behaviors are sometimes the main focus of the study as in Oliveira and colleagues, who focus on PA in older adults (Oliveira et al., 2017), or are assessed as secondary outcomes of studies with other primary aims.

The findings point to a mixed outcome of coaching in regards to behavior change—some studies have not observed health-promoting behavior change, while others, particularly recent ones, show significant change as a result of coaching (Kivelä et al., 2014; The Evidence Center, 2014). The role of coaching has been studied for improving PA and nutrition (DeJesus et al., 2018a; Miller et al., 2018), medication adherence (Wu et al., 2018), tobacco cessation (Sforzo et al., 2014) and others.

Here I highlight coaching as related to increasing physical activity, as it has been identified as the behavior which has the strongest and widest positive benefits for health—for example by the Academy of Medical Royal Colleges in the UK (McNally, 2020). PA has a significant positive impact on overall health, and multiple studies conclude that coaching increases PA compared to control groups or compared to initial levels. Coaching has been showing a positive impact on PA in studies for the past decade (Rimmer et al., 2009). More recently several studies showed a sustained impact of coaching on PA. Annesi et al. (2016) worked with a group of women with obesity and implemented The Coach Approach exercise-support protocol based on cognitive-behavioral models. They found increased PA during the weight loss phase and the weight loss maintenance phase (Annesi et al., 2016). In a group of cardiac patients, Duscha et al. (2018) implemented a program using mHealth and coaching, to maintain the PA levels the patients had achieved during cardiac rehabilitation. While in the group under usual care PA decreased, they found that in the intervention group it increased (Duscha et al., 2018).

In a different setting, specifically with university employees, Bezner et al. (2018) implemented a workplace wellness program consisting of group coaching sessions. This is a theory-informed program based on the trans-theoretical model and self-determination theory, which targeted and tracked the psychological constructs which predicted PA change. Several indicators of PA (as well as relevant psychological constructs such as PA self-efficacy) improved after only an average of 2.3 group coaching sessions (Bezner et al., 2018).

Some studies have explored whether coaching can have a sustained effect on PA after the coaching engagements end. For example, Viester et al. (2017) conducted an RCT with employees of a large construction company. They found that there was a significant effect of the coaching program on meeting the public health guideline of vigorous PA during the six months of the program, but the difference between the groups was not significant at the 12-month follow-up (Viester et al., 2017).

A systematic review and meta-analysis by Oliveira et al. (2017) focused on existing studies assessing the impact of health coaching on increasing PA specifically for older adults (Oliveira et al., 2017). This review selected only RCTs studying PA in this age group and found 27 publications that fit these criteria. It concluded that health coaching has a small but significant effect on increasing PA among adults over 60, as compared to the control groups, immediately after intervention. Interestingly, both trials which used objective and self-report measures of PA found similar levels of the effect of health coaching on PA. The authors conclude with a recommendation for practitioners to include health coaching, especially

considering that it is a relatively low-cost intervention and that it was equally effective for both healthy adults and those with existing health conditions.

Psychosocial Outcomes

In addition to physiological outcomes and health behaviors, health coaching has shown improvement in psychological outcomes such as quality of life, self-efficacy, and indicators of mental health. Quality of Life (QoL) is a frequently measured indicator of psychosocial well-being in the health coaching literature. Clark et al. (2014) found a significant reduction in perceived stress, and depressive symptoms, as well as improvement in the five domains of QoL for employees participating in a wellness coaching program. The program continued for 12 weeks, and the changes were maintained at the 24-week follow-up (Clark et al., 2014).

In the meta-analysis of 22 RCT studies on coaching in Type 2 diabetes, which analyzed HbA1c levels, a qualitative synthesis was conducted for the psychological outcomes (Pirbaglou et al., 2018). It illustrated that more than half of the RCTs included in the review assessed diabetes-related distress, but only three of these showed a significant reduction in distress as a result of the coaching (compared to usual care groups). Similarly, QoL was evaluated in 10 of the publications, and one study showed significant improvement. This study illustrated improvements in the Diabetes Quality of Life Scale which were significant for the coaching group compared to the waitlisted group (Kim et al., 2015). Considering that programs geared toward diabetes self-management do not usually target psychosocial dimensions, the authors recommend designing interventions that more explicitly address the psychological condition (Pirbaglou et al., 2018).

A recent systematic review and meta-analysis of publications on coaching for patients with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) included 10 RCTs (Long et al., 2019). The inclusion criteria were that the studies should measure general QoL or disease-specific health-related quality of life (HRQoL) which is significantly impaired in patients with COPD. The review found that four of the ten studies illustrated improvement in QoL, and the metanalysis showed a positive effect of health coaching. Coaching significantly reduced COPD-related hospital admissions.

Coaching for cancer patients is not often studied, as illustrated in the recent compendiums (Sforzo et al., 2018, 2020). However, for cancer patients, QoL can be an important outcome and in coaching studies, it is often the primary target, along with health-promoting behaviors. Hawkes et al. (2014) studied multiple behaviors and psychosocial outcomes for colorectal cancer survivors, attending a coaching program, randomized to an intervention and usual care groups (Hawkes et al., 2014). They identified an improvement in cancer-specific QoL (particularly in the physical symptoms sub-scale) after the 6 months of the program and at follow-up at 12 months, compared to the control group. Similarly, Park et al. (2012) assessed QoL and psychological symptoms in a pilot RCT with breast cancer patients. They

found improvement in QoL, psychological symptoms, and reduction in distress after the 12-week program—for the coaching group compared to the control group (Park et al., 2012).

Considering the importance of self-efficacy for behavior change, health coaching has been shown to improve people's engagement, attitudes, and self-efficacy for changing specific health behaviors, such as those related to diabetes management, exercise, nutrition, medication adherence, pain management, and communication with providers. Some of the studies that were cited in the above section include measures for self-efficacy as predictors or moderators of the behavioral indicators of coaching impact. For example, Cinar and Schou (2014) discuss oral care self-efficacy for patients with type 2 diabetes, using a sample randomized to a health coaching or health education group. They found that self-efficacy improved for the health coaching group, and is associated with improved glycemic control (Cinar & Schou, 2014). A 12-week program of in-person wellness coaching for employees was shown to improve a range of health behaviors, as well as eating self-efficacy and goal setting skills (Clark et al., 2016).

In the study by Wolever and colleagues, patients with type 2 diabetes were randomized to a group for Integrative health coaching and a control group. After 6 months of coaching in 14 sessions, the health coaching group showed an increase in patients' engagement in their care (measured by the Patient Activation Scale) and decreased perceived barriers to medication adherence (Wolever et al., 2010). Working with cancer patients with significant pain others have found that coaching is associated with increased self-efficacy for communication with providers; pain control self-efficacy was related to a decrease in pain severity, however they did not find evidence for an effect of coaching (Jerant et al., 2010).

Summary

This section has illustrated the rapidly expanding field of health coaching and the studies which explore its effectiveness. The review has the goal of illustrating the main conditions and outcomes of interest during the past decade. The overall conclusion can be that health coaching interventions are generally effective and promising as the field expands, though not all studies show reliable impacts of health coaching.

Another takeaway from the literature is the diversity of the field. The different coaching interventions employ a wide range of theoretical frameworks and approaches, modalities of delivery, length, and frequency of the engagement, as well as follow-up data collection time points. For example, several studies are showing sustainability of coaching effect over longer periods of time as illustrated by one systematic review (Dejonghe et al., 2017); however, such study designs are rare as they are more expensive and difficult to carry out in terms of recruitment and attrition of participants. Delivery modalities vary significantly and often include more than one type. Telephone and virtual coaching is becoming more prominent

and accepted in all types of coaching (Geissler et al., 2014), especially during the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic when face-to-face contact between providers and clients was reduced significantly for all healthcare professionals. Some programs successfully employ telephone coaching (Miller et al., 2018; Sherifali et al., 2019). In a recent systematic review of pharmacist coaching, the conclusion was that coaching delivered face-to-face, through the telephone or electronically has a positive impact on health and behaviors; however, more studies are needed in order to adequately compare the different modalities (Singh et al., 2020b).

In the impetus to illustrate effectiveness, current research prioritizes randomized control trials. Health coaching has reached the stage at which several meta-analyses have been published, which include between 10–22 published RCTs—for example on coaching for type 2 diabetes (Pirbaglou et al., 2018), cardiovascular risk (An & Song, 2020), and COPD (Long et al., 2019). The field has few qualitative or mixed-methods studies which aim to understand the experiences of coaches or coachees, for exceptions see (DeJesus et al., 2018b; Denneson et al., 2019; Goble et al., 2017; McQueen et al., 2020). In the recent compendium on health coaching which covered publications between 2016–2018, out of the 104 peer-reviewed articles included, only five employed qualitative data collection methods such as focus groups or interviews (and only three were fully qualitative) (Sforzo et al., 2020). When qualitative methods are employed in health coaching research, it is usually for program evaluation. However, they can contribute more broadly, to the understanding of the coaching process and relationship, the phenomenology of health and illness, experiences of inequalities and power hierarchies in the healthcare system, the contextual and cultural meanings of health, illness and of coaching itself. Qualitative methodologies need to be further integrated into health coaching research and informed by the extensive literature and discussions in qualitative health research (Braun & Clarke, 2019), to learn directly from practitioners and recipients of coaching about the process and results of coaching.

My point is not that we should be aiming for the unification of coaching approaches, modalities, theoretical frameworks, or study methodologies and designs; rather exploration of all dimensions of health coaching is encouraged, and the accumulation of studies would allow for clearer conclusions about the outcomes of coaching and characteristics of the coaching engagements which are associated with health-promoting results.

Health Coaching Theoretical Frameworks and Approaches

Health coaching is informed by multiple theoretical frameworks with practitioners and researchers contributing to advancing relevant models and their implications for coaching practice. As evident by the brief literature overview in the above section, health coaching aims for lifestyle change and thus is often informed by behavior change theories, either explicitly or implicitly. This theoretical orientation to behavior change theory is included in the definition of health coaching (Wolever et al.,

2013); which has also been the base for several recent reviews (Sforzo et al., 2018, 2020). While in the initial stages of health coaching research the focus was on clinically and behaviorally relevant outcomes without explicit discussion of theoretical frameworks, more recent publications are explicit about the theoretical frameworks which inform the study design and/or the coaching practice. More recent reviews of the coaching literature, for example in Type 2 diabetes, spell out the theoretical frameworks which inform the coaching intervention in the studies included in the systematic review and meta-analysis (Pirbaglou et al., 2018). This review concludes that coaching training and interventions are based on frameworks such as patient-centered communication, motivational interviewing, PRECEDE_PROCEED, social cognitive theory and self-efficacy, the transtheoretical model and cognitive behavioral therapy constructs. Health coaching has also been influenced by other conceptual frameworks such as adult development, self-determination theory, positive psychology, and coaching psychology (Passmore & Lai, 2019).

More specifically, the empirical studies cited in this chapter have been informed for example by social cognitive theory (Annesi et al., 2016), the taxonomy of behavior change techniques (Godino et al., 2016), self-determination theory (Bezner et al., 2018; Denneson et al., 2019), the self-efficacy construct (Cinar & Schou, 2014; Clark et al., 2016), the self-help model and community-based participatory research (Kim et al., 2015), acceptance and commitment therapy (Hawkes et al., 2014) and the transtheoretical model of change (Bezner et al., 2018).

Health coaching practice and research design could benefit from additional interdisciplinary conversations, for example with current developments in behavioral change science (see chapter: "Health in Coaching"). Much work in this area is being conducted in health psychology such as that on integrative theories and theory-informed behavior change techniques (Bohlen et al., 2020), as well as critiques of widely employed models (Sniehotta et al., 2014). For example, a recent publication reported a detailed thematic analysis of theory-based coaching techniques using the behavior change techniques taxonomy (Ryan et al., 2020). The concepts of the behavior intention gap and implementation intentions have also been applied successfully to coaching (Greif, 2018); see also chapter: "Motivation, Volition, and Implementation".

Health coaching can be informed by coaching models more broadly, as well as by the idea of shifting to different models, depending on the situation and need (Kauffman & Hodgetts, 2016). Of relevance are models of health coaching informed by narrative theory and implemented in different ways in healthcare and patient coaching. These emphasize meaning-making through narrative, including constructing meanings of health and illness, and the relational construction of meaning (Drake, 2017; Stelter, 2015); see also chapter: "Meaning as a Theme in Coaching". Such frameworks are of interest in current times when the public health landscape has changed dramatically during the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic, we are reflecting deeply on the meaning of this crisis, and our awareness of multiple contributions to our health has increased (see the section below).

Coaching Professionals, Certification, and Competencies

Health coaches aim to help patients prevent or manage chronic conditions in a collaborative way. Their competencies and knowledge are thus different from those of other professionals in healthcare, as well as from those of coaches in other contexts (Wolever et al., 2017). As stated by the authors, most other health professions emphasize treating and teaching clients and patients, and there is an assumption that the provider is the one who teaches the patient. On the other hand, health coaching is a patient and relationship-centered engagement, which is focused on the clients' agenda, goals, strengths, and existing resources and how to identify and harness them for improving health. The content of the session is directed mainly by the client's preferences and concerns.

At the same time, health coaching can be different from other areas of coaching such as executive coaching, since information provision and education about the disease could be necessary at times. This aspect of health coaching is included in the definition of health coaching we cited at the beginning of the chapter (Wolever et al., 2013). This means that health coaches need to have knowledge about the disease and aspects of its treatment, and at the same time have the skills to provide that information in ways that are relationship centered and support client motivation and self-efficacy. Health coaches can work independently, and more and more often are becoming part of integrated medical teams, particularly in primary care (Gastala et al., 2018). Being part of an integrated medical team speaks for the need for specific competencies related both to knowledge and teamwork in healthcare. Additionally, the coaching clients whom health coaching professionals work with might be more vulnerable due to their chronic conditions, compared to clients in organizations (Wolever et al., 2017). In summary, professional boards for health coaches need to take the specifics of the profession into account when identifying competencies, accrediting programs, and certifying health coaches.

The training and certification of health coaching is a widely discussed topic, and agencies across the globe have been actively involved in identifying standards for knowledge and competencies for coaches working in healthcare. Several international and national professional organizations identify coaching competencies (for example, The Association for Coaching (AC), International Coaching Federation (ICF), European Mentoring and Coaching Council (EMCC), and some such as the National Board for Health and Wellness Coaching (NBHWC) specify health coaching specific competencies.

A recent systematic review (Singh et al., 2020a) aimed to identify the core "skills, knowledge, attitudes, and attributes associated with health coaching", as well as to discuss how they map onto general coaching competencies identified by international coaching organizations (specifically EMCC and ICF). The review identified 18 publications that fit the inclusion criteria over the period of 1950–2018 and nine

competencies for health coaches, which are proposed in the literature.[1] Many of these were found to overlap with competencies identified by EMCC and ICF, while four are specific to health coaching. One of the specific competencies is "demonstrates team and leadership skills to optimize healthcare," which speaks to the context in which health coaches work and could be part of an interdisciplinary team.

NBHWC in the United States implemented a collaborative interdisciplinary process over several years to develop a job description,[2] standards, and certification for health coaches (Jordan et al., 2015; Wolever et al., 2016). They created training and education standards for health coaches, and procedures for accrediting health and wellness coaching programs (NBHWC, 2020). Requirements for national certification of health coaches include completion of an accredited program, as well as the National Board Certification Examination, which is in coordination with the National Board of Medical Examiners (NBME, 2020). Additionally, based on the advocacy from this organization, since January 1, 2020, the American Medical Association has approved a new Category III Current Procedural Terminology (CPT) Billing Codes for health and wellness coaching, which sets the ground for reimbursement of coaching services by insurers. This has been a significant accomplishment for the recognition of health coaching and potential access to and wider utilization of coaching in healthcare.

The Changing Landscape of Health and Health Coaching

Health coaching emerged as a practice at a time in which chronic diseases dominated the health landscape, many of them preventable and treatable with behavioral changes. We are now living in a time that has palpably brought to our attention the risk of infectious disease on a global scale. For years healthcare systems have been dealing with antibiotic-resistant bacteria the threat of which is increasing. Several outbreaks of coronavirus epidemics are evident since the early 2000s (SARS-CoV, MERS-CoV) and most recently the novel SARS-CoV-2 pandemic

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[1]Competencies for health coaches base on a systematic review (Singh et al., 2020a): communicates effectively for the delivery of patient centered care; demonstrates team and leadership skills to optimize healthcare; demonstrates an understanding of relevant, fundamental, and evidence-based knowledge and undertakes lifelong learning to improve professional practice; demonstrates tolerance and respect for individuals and groups from diverse backgrounds; demonstrates professional behavior and accountability; demonstrates the ability to utilize empathy when communicating with patients; demonstrates confidence; identifies areas for development to improve competency; works systematically and coordinates activities.

[2]The job description for health coaching from NBHWC is: "Health and Wellness Coaches are professionals from diverse backgrounds and education who work with individuals and groups in a client-centered process to facilitate and empower the client to achieve self-determined goals related to health and wellness. Successful coaching takes place when coaches apply clearly defined knowledge and skills so that clients mobilize internal strengths and external resources for sustainable change."

caused high morbidity and mortality and wreaked havoc in health systems globally. It has had severe consequences for all people and institutions and has evoked reflections about who we are, what we are doing, how we are all connected, and what is of utmost importance.

The field of health coaching can also take this time as an opportunity to appreciate its accomplishments and reflect on its future; as well as what on what its role could be in the transformed global landscape of health, illness, and healthcare. Coaching researchers and practitioners have reflected on the potential for coaching to support people at the time of the pandemic crisis, so far, particularly as it relates to mental health (Williams & Palmer, 2020) or health provider burnout (Institute of Coaching, 2020).

The Covid-19 pandemic does not eclipse the importance of chronic diseases; on the contrary, it has illuminated what happens when chronic and infectious diseases intersect, what a significant risk factor chronic diseases are for susceptibility to infectious diseases. Morbidity and mortality data are showing that people with accompanying chronic conditions such as hypertension, obesity, and diabetes are more susceptible to contracting and having more severe progression of COVID-19. Health coaching's role increases when we realize the importance of preventing and reducing chronic disease, in order to reduce the additional risks of novel infectious diseases. Additionally, as the example of COVID-19 shows, social behavioral strategies are crucial in preventing transmission and serious illness. Behavioral science offers theory-informed approaches to preventive behavior change to reduce virus transmission and adhere to public health measures, through changing attitudes, beliefs, and motivations, which health coaches are very familiar with (West et al., 2020); see also chapter: "Health in Coaching".

Most importantly, the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic has exposed as well as exacerbated the health inequalities associated with chronic conditions and has illuminated their social and economic determinants, as well as started a discussion about what we can learn from these insights, to improve health and reduce inequalities in the future (Coates et al., 2020). The SARS-CoV-2 pandemic and its severe cases have disproportionally affected racial and ethnic minorities, those living in difficult socioeconomic circumstances, who are more vulnerable to infection and have had higher mortality rates. Research and practice in health coaching have occasionally addressed health inequalities especially in the past several years (Schultz et al., 2020; Thom et al., 2018), for example through implementing programs in impoverished neighborhoods (Gootjes et al., 2019), or illustrating that participating in coaching can reduce inequalities in coronary heart disease risk factors (Jelinek et al., 2014). The events happening before our eyes compel us to ask how coaching's role can be further expanded and implemented in a way that is accessible and beneficial for all. One step toward affordability has been the approval of billing codes in the US, which however will take time to be applied, and will then be helpful only to those with health insurance. Thus, there is a clear need to consider ways that coaching can be provided through social programs.

Another question is how the heightened awareness of health and structural inequalities brought about by the pandemic expand the purpose of health coaching

and what that means for the content of coaching practice and conversations. Jordan has illustrated how coaching conversations with vulnerable populations need to focus attention on safe housing, healthcare access, education, and safety (Jordan, 2013). She also underscores that coaching supports participants' self-efficacy and internal resources to cope with the environmental stressors and economic impoverishment in their daily lives. At the same time, these individual resources can have only partial relevance in overcoming structural inequalities which illustrates the limitations of an individual empowerment and behavior change model. The situation compels health coaching to consider how it can be instrumental in reducing health disparities caused by structural inequalities and in influencing ineffective or unjust policies.

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Implicit Leadership Theories and their Importance in Coaching

Belinda Seeg and Astrid Schütz ⓘD

Implicit Leadership Theories

> Theory is the net we cast out to capture 'the world'—to rationalize, explain and control it
> –Karl Popper

Stephanie has been in charge of a twelve-member team for three years—in addition to her project responsibility. Instead of the hoped-for routine, an increasing feeling of being overstrained has arisen. Stephanie has the impression that she has failed in her leadership task. In the coaching offered by her supervisor, she describes her situation: "As team lead, I have to be constantly available and approachable for all my followers to support them in their work. I also need to have a complete overview of everything in my area of responsibility. But I can perform less and less of my own tasks. Constant interruptions are making my work increasingly frustrating. I manage less and less of my multiple tasks."

When one is asked what constitutes leadership, some characteristics will come to mind—e.g., leaders have everything under control, are stressed, flexible, performance motivated or dominant. We all have subjective assumptions about leadership or the personality of leaders—not all are necessarily positive or true. In addition to explicit knowledge of what constitutes leadership, implicit assumptions are (1) based *on unsubstantiated knowledge* from individual experiences in interactions between leaders and followers, (2) *automatically activated,* and (3) *unconscious*. These thoughts also influence our perceptions of leadership. Parts of the assumptions

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about leadership that combine these characteristics are called *Implicit Leadership Theories* (ILT). The present contribution summarizes the relevance of ILT for successful coaching. After an overview of meaning, variants, consequences, and changeability of ILT, an empirically founded coaching approach is proposed to use (i.e., reflect on and modify) ILT for successful leader identity development.

What Are Implicit Leadership Theories?

ILT are subjective assumptions regarding leadership. They are based on associative connections and are a result of individual needs, experiences, and values (Fiske & Taylor, 1991). These connections are unconscious social-cognitive structures of the semantic memory and are organized in categories (see Calder, 1977). They are the basis for impulsive information processing. Contrary to reflective information processing (as distinguished in two-process theories), impulsive information processing is involuntary and automatic (Strack & Deutsch, 2004). Automatic processing conserves cognitive resources in continuously guiding perception and behavior.

ILT help the individual to quickly understand the environment with a minimum of *cognitive resources*. Thus, they serve as an orientation and assessment yardstick for *behavior* and perception in a leadership context. The *affective level* of ILT is rooted in learning processes in which certain behaviors have been reinforced by positive consequences. Similarly, during socialization, terms are linked to affective meaning and expectations. For example, the terms "leader" and "manager" are associated with power but also have negative connotations (Schröder et al., 2013). For a detailed overview of the theoretical background see Lord et al. (2020), who recently supplied a comprehensive review of extant research of implicit theories about leadership.

The influence of ILT can be seen in the selection of leaders. They also have an impact on everyday relations between leaders and followers, their understanding of the roles they have, and their well-being. As long as ILT are functional, i.e., effectively support action, it is advantageous that they work automatically in the background and require only minimal cognitive resources. But if they are dysfunctional and inhibit successful leadership, the advantage of these involuntary processes turns to the negative. This is the case, for example, when ILT are incompatible between leaders and followers or when there are discrepancies between ILT and the self-concept of a leader. According to Higgins (1987), negative emotions result from such discrepancies between the real and ideal self. Often a leader's desire to enter coaching originates in their perception of not being able to meet their own standards.

In a way, ILT are thus comparable to a virus protection program on a PC. As long as they work functionally, they are hardly noticed and effectively support our work processes. However, if dysfunctional processes make it necessary to change the underlying automatisms, these must be brought onto the user interface by intense search effort to be able to systematically edit the "program settings." As these
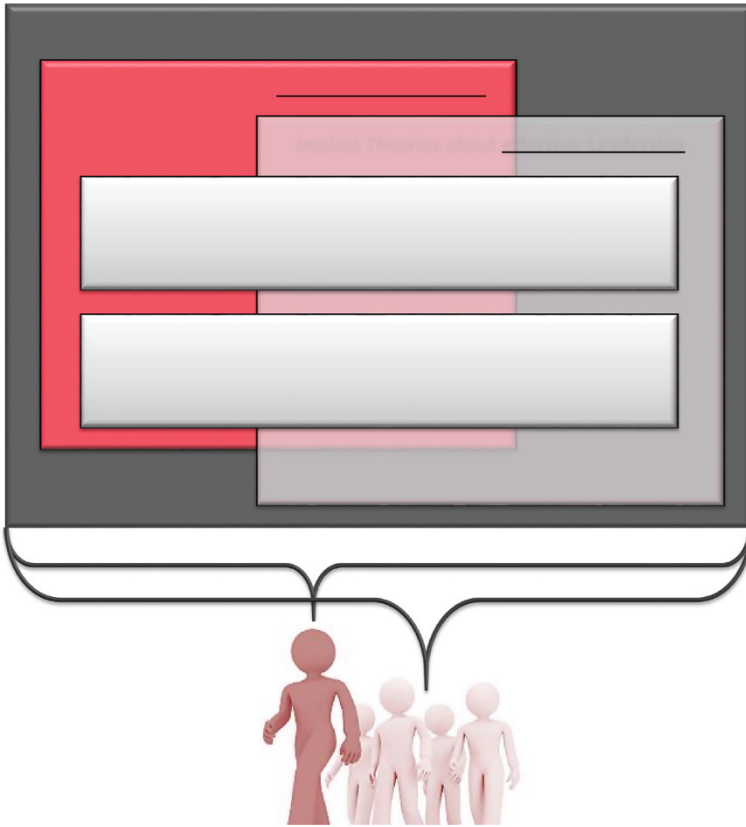
Fig. 1 Structural overview of implicit theories about leadership

programs are firmly anchored and very complex, this process can be very strenuous and may require professional help. In the case of dysfunctional ILT, coaching can provide this support. In the process of coaching, ILT can be changed in a goal-oriented manner by making people becoming aware of and systematically reflecting on them.

Variants of Implicit Leadership Theories

As elaborated above, ILT can be understood very broadly and include subjective assumptions about characteristics of leadership. For the use of ILT in coaching, however, it is necessary to distinguish variants of implicit theories about leadership (see Fig. 1).

A distinction is made between implicit theories about prototypical leadership (*How is leadership in general?*) and effective leadership (*What distinguishes the best*

leadership?). Thus, the *actual state* (*How is a certain leadership situation perceived?*) can be compared to a prototypical ILT as a norm and effective ILT as an ideal (*target states*). As shown, prototypical and effective ILT can overlap. However, if the assumptions about "how leadership is in general" contain negative images of leadership, subjective norms and ideals may strongly diverge.

Since personal leadership consists of interactions between leaders and followers, a further distinction of ILT into implicit theories of characteristics and behavior of leaders (ILT) versus followers (IFT), is helpful (Shondrick & Lord, 2010). ILT and IFT influence each other in a reciprocal fashion and shape roles as well as the self-concepts of leaders and followers. Both types of theories can be analyzed in coaching from an internal and external perspective. Accordingly, implicit theories about leadership should be distinguished from the perspective of the leaders versus the followers.

Consequences of Implicit Leadership Theories

The emergence and consequences of implicit theories can be explained on the basis of social-cognitive theories according to Fiske and Taylor (1991). These are illustrated in Fig. 2.

Being a specific form of cognitive schemata, implicit theories evolve based on needs, experiences, and values. They influence both, behavior in social situations and relevant perceptions. The resulting consequences are stored as new experiences and have direct or filtered effects on implicit theories via existing needs, experiences, and values. Thus, these theories are constantly adapted on the basis of new experiences. This adaptation process is mostly automated—comparable to the continuous updates in a virus protection program.
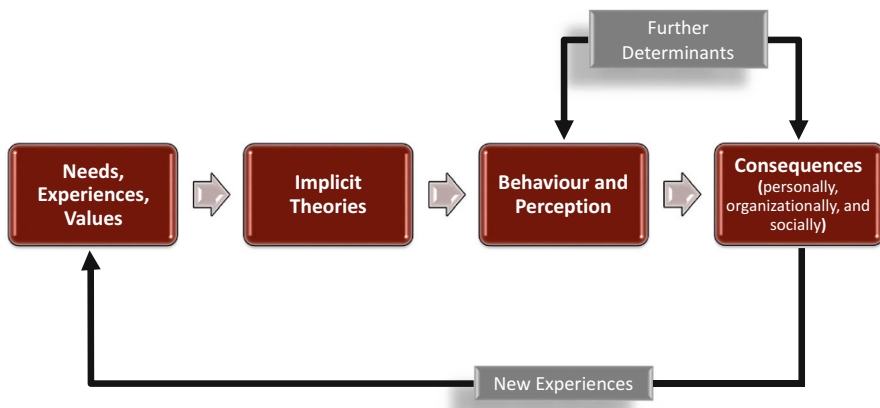
Fig. 2 Origin and consequences of implicit theories

Effects on Classification and Identification of Leaders

Consequences of ILT are evident in how people consider a target person's leadership aptitude. If a person possesses a feature that is part of the perceiver's ILT, they are usually automatically perceived as a capable leader—no matter whether the feature is in fact a relevant criterion for successful leadership (i.e., halo effect). If only some features are known, gaps are automatically filled with ILT-congruent information. Thus, ILT do not only influence selection and promotion, but also the way in which managers are perceived in everyday working life (Schyns et al., 2007). Such a feature can be gender or a distinctive characteristic such as height. For example, the *think-manager-think-male* stereotype of gender-specific roles influences the perception of leaders in an involuntary fashion (Sczesny, 2003).

Offermann and Coats (2017) identified typical factors in ILT: Sensitivity, Dedication, Tyranny, Charisma, Strength, Masculinity, and Intelligence. Additionally, they identified a new relevant ILT factor "creativity". Such ILT may, by means of a self-fulfilling prophecy, affect perceptions and behavior. As a result, they can indeed be critical to success. For example, the implicit assumption "directive (as opposed to participative) leadership behavior increases team efficiency" will result in advantages for directive as opposed to participative leaders in the selection, promotion, and evaluation (Pfeffer et al., 1998). Even though there are typical ILT factors, one also has to keep in mind that individuals have idiographic implicit theories and may use them differently, based on their personal experiences and contexts (Lord et al., 2020).

Effects on the Cooperation between Leaders and Followers

The more a leader corresponds to a follower's ILT (i.e., to their leadership ideal) the better is the quality of the leader-follower relationship. This, in turn, has a positive effect on the well-being, job satisfaction, and work attitudes of the followers (Epitropaki et al., 2013; Junker et al., 2011). Recent studies also show that a positive employee image and thus effective IFTs from both, leadership and follower perspective, are particularly conducive to positive leader-follower relationships (Epitropaki et al., 2013).

Changeability of Implicit Leadership Theories

The cycle on the development and consequences of implicit theories (see Fig. 2) shows that ILT are on the one hand situationally activated and subject to constant automatic adaptation through experiential learning. On the other hand, implicit theories are relatively stable due to their associative links and related self-serving

perceptual distortion. This stabilizing effect is reinforced by the culturally anchored affective meanings of leadership-related terms. Overall, it is therefore not easy to change implicit theories. On the basis of intensive self-reflection and corresponding motivation, however, it is possible to optimize implicit theories about leadership (Quaquebeke & Schmerling, 2010). In addition to the desire for change, there are other conditions that promote change, which were summarized by Epitropaki et al. (2013):

- Dramatic changes in the leadership context and conflicts between old and new implicit theories of a person.
- Experiences that question the validity or usefulness of previous implicit theories.
- Counterexamples to existing implicit theories, such as successful women in CEO positions.

In summary, implicit theories are not only continuously and automatically updated but can also be changed in a goal-directed manner. However, this process requires an intention to change and intensive reflection work. Coaches can use these insights to support change by drawing attention to these aspects through reflection questions. But one should be aware of the fact that the coaches themselves are also influenced by their implicit theories about leadership and that these also have unconscious effects on the coaching process. "They influence the choice of categories used to capture the coaching process and the resulting image of coaching" (Geisler, 2011, p. 98). A systematic coaching approach for the effective use of implicit theories to support leader identity development is described in the following section.

Coaching with Implicit Leadership Theories

If you don't know the harbor you're sailing into, no wind is the right one.
–Lucius Annaeus Seneca

Bamberg Coaching Approach

The Bamberg coaching approach follows a personality psychology-based effect model. The central core of which is systematic reflection support (Riedelbauch & Laux, 2011). This coaching approach is very well suited for working with ILT. Based on a process model, the following main areas of reflection are considered:

- *Instruction for systematic self-reflection* (internal perspective).
- *Feedback* (external perspective).
- *Goal-oriented problem reflection* (general conditions and possible obstacles).

In such a coaching process it is important to use a variety of compatible methods and consider *fit to the client's needs*, according to the Bamberg model on coaching impact (Seeg & Schütz, 2015, 2016). The underlying process model of that approach is based on eight steps for the achievement of a coherent leader identity[1] (Riedelbauch & Laux, 2011). The coaching process includes the optimization of implicit and explicit patterns of thought as well as behaviors. The relevance of implicit theories about leadership in the respective steps and how they can be used is outlined below on the basis of the guiding questions. In accordance with the overriding criterion of idiographic orientation, the Bamberg coaching approach focuses on the specific needs and issues of the coaching clients and not a deterministic process. Thus, individual steps can be repeated or changed in sequence.

Use of Implicit Theories in Coaching

Step 1: What Is My Goal?

This is where the initial situation and the coaching topics are clarified. A typical answer to the question about the reason for coaching was outlined in the case study of Stephanie above. In this, the subjective assumptions about leadership and the associated expectations of the coaching client result in a discrepancy between reality (Real Self: *I cannot fulfil my tasks and the needs of my followers.*) and personal ILT (Ideal Self: *As a team lead, I have to be constantly available for my followers to support them in their work*.). This leads to an incongruity and represents the origin of the optimization wish. According to Higgins (1987) this state can express itself in depression or dissatisfaction and can be accompanied by feelings of disappointment and sadness. In terms of methods, Riedelbauch and Laux (2011) suggest questions for behavioral-analytic problem analysis based on Kanfer and Saslow (1965) or exploration of previous attempts at solutions.

Steps 2 and 3: How Do I See Myself? How Do I Want to See Myself?

These steps are about identifying and activating real, normative, and possible self-images of leadership:

- *Real self*: How do I see myself in my leadership position?
- *Ideal self*: How do I want to be seen by others and myself?
- *Normative self (ought self)*: How do I think I should be as a leader?

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[1] Leader identity can be defined as "a sub-component of one's working self-concept that includes leadership schemas, leadership experiences and future representations of oneself as a leader" (Epitropaki et al., 2017, p. 107).

This can be methodologically supported by questionnaires (such as the Bochum Inventory of Occupational Personality Description (BIP) by Hossiep and Paschen (2003)), e.g., with a focus on the real or the normative self. Alternatively, standardized procedures such as the exploration of attributed strengths and weaknesses or a technique called "inner team" (Schulz von Thun & Stegemann, 2007) can be helpful. By reflecting values and options for development, a strategy can be chosen.

As noted above, the self-images and self-discrepancy of leaders depend on their implicit theories about leadership, as these theories serve as orientation for behavior and perception. In order to identify the theories, however, a central challenge must be met: implicit theories are by definition unconscious (Schyns et al., 2011), but their use requires explicit awareness and controlled information processing. To increase awareness, ILT can be measured in two ways: (1) directly by asking questions about goal-oriented attributes of leadership (e.g., through questionnaires, such as the *German Implicit Leadership Theories* (GILT) developed by van Quaquebeke and Brodbeck (2008)) and (2) indirectly by inferring them from different types of behavior (e.g., through descriptions and visual representations) or from association patterns (e.g., through Implicit Association Tests).

Step 4: How Do Others See Me? What Do Others Expect from Me?

As can be seen from the dynamic interaction model of self-interpretation, the external perspective of relevant reference persons such as followers, colleagues, superiors, independent observers is decisive for self-evaluation and self-awareness. Thus, the external perspective, which is also influenced by implicit theories of the reference person is assessed and compared to the internal perspectives.

Methods that use perceptions of relevant reference persons from the outside are suitable for capturing the external perspective. For example, mirroring and feedback from the coach can be used as well as multimodal leadership feedback (360° feedback) based on questionnaires.

In this step, it is particularly important that coaches provide individual feedback, especially in the case of moderate external evaluation, and support the development of change goals. It should be made clear that external feedback is not a reflection of facts, but of perceptions.

Step 5: How Are Internal and External Views Related? What Patterns of Self-representation Result from This?

In this step an integration of the knowledge about internal and external perspectives takes place. Relevant patterns of experience and behavior resulting from typical and critical interactions are processed. The ILT of the coaching clients and their interaction partners can be used to explain interaction patterns.

As a preparatory step, the use of value and development squares, including the internal and external perspective, can also be helpful. Important methods are

behavioral and experience-activating methods, such as (diagnostic) role plays with elements from psychodrama according to Moreno (1959) and video feedback. In addition, a visualization of the interaction style, for example by means of cycle diagrams, helps to derive development goals.

Step 6: In Which Framework Conditions Do I Work? Which Conditions Are Relevant for My Coaching Topics?

The interaction between the internal and external perspectives is significantly influenced by the external framework (Riedelbauch & Laux, 2011) and is at the focus of clarification and change work in coaching step 6. Implicit theories shape norms of self-presentations for leaders. Self-perception and worldview determine whether and how a person positions himself or herself in his or her various environments, and in particular they are also condensed in our cognitive-affective schemata (Hauke, 2011). A central focus of leaders in understanding their professional challenges is their environment. What is often overlooked, however, is the possibility of influencing external conditions, role concepts, and resulting expectations. Thus, it is important to guide reflection on these issues.

A direct and very important sphere of leaders' influence is the active shaping of relationships with their followers, which in turn defines the understanding of the leadership role. These relationships are interrelated with the ILT and IFT of the leaders and the followers. These implicit schemes can be made conscious through systematic coaching work and can be used for goal-oriented change.

Methodologically, this step can be supported by exploration and analysis during the coaching conversation as well as role analysis. Methods for analyzing and visualizing social systems can also be helpful.

Step 7: Which Competences Can I Develop? Which Competences Are Important for me to Achieve My Goals?

To resolve self-discrepancies between the reality (real self) and personal ILT (ideal self) of the coaching client, it is important to focus on the target state of an individually coherent leader identity. Under the guiding question "What *could I be like?*" coaching clients should be supported in expanding their scope of possibilities. On the one hand, one can start with the real self through the acquisition of new behavior or competences. On the other hand, one can work on self and role models of the ideal self, which are shaped by ILT. This can be supported by developing a more realistic ILT.

As was elaborated above, the reflection and modification of ILT require the conscious control of otherwise automatic process patterns in information processing, experience, and behavior. The alteration of ILT is possible but requires changes in self-perpetuating cycles. It is important to understand that coaching clients often

perceive personality traits as largely fixed and hardly changeable. To support changes effectively, static theories must be questioned and reflected upon.

In aiming to change implicit theories, it is therefore particularly important that coaches support systematic experiential learning toward a desired identity. Suitable methods are creativity techniques, self-modeling, role-plays with stage directions, methods of psychodrama as well as the repeated confrontation with alternative self-images and desired behavior, e.g., through videography in everyday working life (Riedelbauch & Laux, 2011).

Step 8: Which Leader Identity Do I Want to Establish in the Long Term?

The final step of personality coaching aims at an explicit definition of the ideal self with the characteristics of the leader identity that is desired in the long term. By consciously and reflectively processing the target state, coaching clients can independently control the long-term establishment of goals and evaluate the corresponding successes.

Methodologically this can be supported by semi-standardized interviews, questions of scale, or other guided reflections.

Conclusion

Implicit theories about leadership are subjective assumptions about prototypical or effective leadership and followership. They are based on experiential learning, are automatically activated by associative connections, and unconsciously influence behavior and perception in leadership contexts. If implicit theories are dysfunctional, they impair the cooperation and well-being of leaders and followers. Modification of implicit theories is possible but requires an intention to change as well as specific reflection work for raising awareness and systematic processing of one's role in leadership contexts. Coaching can contribute to desired changes by using models such as the Bamberg coaching approach. This approach can help clients to understand themselves better and to act in a more congruent fashion. The focus is on working toward a match between the real and ideal selves. This strategy facilitates effective leader-follower relationships and enhances the well-being of leaders and followers. Thus, implicit theories about leadership can be understood as a key concept to tackle in coaching.

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Individual and Collective Defense Mechanisms

Heidi Möller, Thomas Giernalczyk, and Denise Hinn

Introduction

Working with the concept of defense mechanisms allows an additional level of reflection in coaching. The client can think together with his coach about whether there is something unnoticed that is relevant, but that cannot be immediately observed. Working on defenses thus expands the coach's and client's viewpoints and increases their scope of action.

Case Study

In a coaching assignment, a 40-year-old manager, Jack, described the pressure he faced at work. A colleague, Steve, had asked the executive board to reduce Jack's area of responsibility while increasing his own.

The coach expressed surprise to hear that Jack was not annoyed by or angry at his colleague's behavior. Jack reacted visibly irritated and said: "Now that you are saying this, I'm surprised too." He explained that he had had close contact with the colleague in the past and that he might therefore have some kind of "inhibition." During further discussions, the coach explored whether Jack had learned this pattern of inhibiting his emotional expression earlier in life. Jack referred to his relationship with his father, who had repeatedly experienced mental illness and delusional

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phases. In these phases, Jack's father had appeared to be very threatening. Jack assumed that he had suppressed the ability to develop anger toward his father. This seemed to have been the biographical origins of his present inability to experience anger in a relationship with a work colleague.

This insight encouraged Jack to rethink his approach to his colleague. He planned to present himself more assertively and to draw boundaries more clearly. He took away the formula: my colleague is not my father.

The Concept of Defense Mechanisms

The theory of defense mechanisms is an early cornerstone of psychoanalytic theory, beginning with Freud's work in 1894, in which he primarily dealt with the concept of defense. The further development of this theory is inseparably linked to the name Anna Freud. In her 1936 monograph "The Ego and the Mechanisms of Defence," she presented a comprehensive overview of the mechanisms that had been widely scattered and disaggregated in psychoanalytical literature to that date. She has also helped to identify a further phenomenon occurring in clinical practice which is commonly known as resistance: defense against the therapeutic process itself.

Defense mechanisms are psychological processes that have the purpose of helping us to mentally cope with, or compensate for, conflicting mental tendencies (drives, desires, motives, and values) and to reduce or remove this conflict. They first serve to protect the individual and secure that individual's psychological balance. They thus form the basis of self-control. The unconscious process of the respective defense formation is to be understood as an ego function (Benecke & Möller, 2014). The ego repels unpleasant affects and unwanted impulses of the id. These unconscious processes have to be distinguished from the conscious coping with everyday problems. The theory assumes that a certain defensive constellation represents the best conflict resolution possible for an individual at a given point in time.

Defense mechanisms can be both functional and dysfunctional. For example, the isolation of a surgeon's affect is certainly useful during an operation, but it will be detrimental during patient interactions, such as when delivering bad news.

In psychoanalytic theory, mature, secondary defense mechanisms are to be distinguished from immature, primary defense mechanisms. The defense mechanisms allow conclusions to be drawn about the individual's level of structural integration. The Operationalized Psychodynamic Diagnosis system (OPD Task Force, 2008) distinguishes between four levels of structural integration, each with characteristic defense mechanisms: high, moderate, low, and disintegrated—whereas the latter signifies such a severe degree of personality pathology that we shall not discuss it here any further for the context of coaching. In the following, we shall list common defense strategies for each level of structural integration.

High Level of Integration

Repression: The word repression is often used in everyday language as a synonym for defense mechanisms as a whole. However, it means quite specifically that memories, fantasies, aspects of reality are made unconscious in order to banish the emotional danger from within. Affective memory loses its connection to the language. Taboos, lowering of self-esteem, and/or threatening ideas are cut off from the conscious experience. As an example: The head of quality management, Jess, was disappointed by the moderate rating she received in her yearly appraisal from her newly appointed managing director. Jess explained during her coaching session that she had been achieving good results for years. She took up the suggestion to replay the first conversation between her and the managing director. She recalled that the managing director had been critical of some of the processes used in her team, but she decided to stick with these processes nonetheless. The coach asked her if she had taken this into account in the interim report? The client paused and denied. Jess recalled how she had at the time found the comments of the MD disparaging, but had repressed this unpleasant part of the interaction that questioned her competence. She protected her self-esteem, but in doing so lost the opportunity to review the processes in her team and address the new MD's concerns.

Intellectualization: Emotional experiences are treated in a formal, non-affectual, predominantly cognitive way. Through a high level of abstraction, emotions are generalized or minimized and thus may be viewed as more controllable by the individual. As an example from coaching, the CEO of a listed company reports intellectually on the upcoming redundancy of 1800 employees.

Rationalization: Behaviors, thoughts, experiences, observations, and feelings are subsequently justified. Rational explanations are sought, which are mostly constructed and personally shaped. In this way, an individual can avoid cognitive dissonance and subsequently give meaning to his behavior. As an example: The new recruit, Ollie, was rejected after a one-day trial for the job. In a later meeting with his coach, he showed himself to be relieved. He reported having immediately known that there was something wrong with this company and that he was happy to be able to step away. The rationalization of the applicant protects Ollie from the disappointment of having been rejected and ignores the question of whether he could learn something about himself from this situation. For him, there is no dissonance between him first wanting the post and then not being able to take it on.

Moderate Level of Integration

Affectualization: The counterpart to intellectualization describes an over-emotionalization or dramatization that is used to avoid insight. As an example: In many mental health services, there is often a strongly over-emotionalized culture, which results in an overemphasis on the personal relationship between employees.

Relationships between employees often seem more important than professional work with clients.

Reaction formation and counter-occupation: Impulses and emotions are reversed creating their opposite. Phenomena marked by the inner censor as unacceptable movements are replaced by diametrically opposed thoughts. An example would be when I praise my competitor, in order not to let my rejection become perceptible.

Regression: In order to escape a situation experienced as too stressful, a person regresses through a temporary retreat to an earlier stage of personality development. An example would be when a normal day-to-day disagreement in a team is met with tearfulness, retreat, or defiance.

Progression: As a counterpart to regression, progression is described as a "flight into adulthood." In a way that overtaxes the individual, he or she takes on too much of a responsibility that exceeds his or her currently available competencies, skills, and abilities. For example: While leading her team of 15 employees, Libby, the team leader, takes on another project that involves her working at another location for 30 h a week. Progressively, she underestimates the demands of this new work and over-estimates her performance.

Undoing: Impulses, thoughts, words, or actions that are assessed as "illicit" appear briefly in consciousness and are compensated by an opposing thought, thus neutralizing them again. For example, in a nursing home, the intense emotions of dementia patients, up to death wishes, are met with overly pampering care.

Idealization: In idealization, self-esteem is achieved through the relationship to a respected object or individual. For example, having an appointment with a famous coach increases the manager's self-esteem.

Devaluation: In order not to experience feelings of envy, dependence, or loss, the object is devalued. Self-esteem regulation, therefore, takes place at the expense of the devaluation of others. For example, Lena, a team manager, is dismissed without notice on performance grounds. She responds by devaluing the group as a team of underperformers, claiming it was not her fault she was dismissed.

Shift: Wishes, feelings, and fears are shifted from one object to another and can be changed both qualitatively and quantitatively. For example, I feel treated unfairly by my supervisor and let out my anger at my partner and children at the dinner table.

Low Level of Integration

Turn against the self: Aggressive impulses are not directed against the person who causes the anger but in the form of auto-aggression against one's self. The interpersonal field is thus kept free of disturbances, an interpersonal conflict is avoided at the expense of an intrapsychic conflict. As an example, a department head, Rosie, claims there is high employee turnover in her department. She fundamentally questions her leadership ability and does not consider other factors such as pay being 30% lower in her company than in competitors and only temporary contracts being issued. Both

factors are managed by the board toward which she does not develop any critical thoughts.

Introjection: Introjection means taking an object in. The separation between me and the other is thereby abolished. As an example, I adopt 100% of the performance requirements of an overstretching boss and attribute every failure to myself and not to the unachievable demands of the boss.

Identification with the aggressor: Identification with the aggressor can be regarded as a special case of introjection. For example, in social work with violent offenders, there can be sometimes massive, psychologically violent dynamics in the teams. The team unconsciously identified with the perpetrators thus unconsciously fends off feelings of powerlessness and helplessness while seemingly regaining control.

Externalization: In order to relieve the self of the affects of shame and guilt, but also of responsibility, events are blamed on other persons and/or external circumstances. Externalization is regarded as somewhat less serious and more superficial than projection. For example, a male colleague who again does not get a professorship blames the informal quota of women at universities for his failure.

Acting out: Immediately and unfiltered, the inner world is given expression in the external world. The background is the poor ability of the ego to postpone impulses. For example, in a boring meeting, an employee screams at their colleagues: "I'm just not putting up with this shit anymore!"

Somatization: The actual conflict, e.g., with colleagues at the workplace, is not felt, but the unconscious escape into illness is initiated. For example, an urgent, difficult decision with which many employees will not agree is avoided by bowel disease. In contrast to conversion as described by Freud, the manifestation of this defense mechanism has no symbolic meaning.

Splitting: Good and bad objects (interaction partners) remain separated from each other by this defense. Through splitting a world is constructed in which there are clearly good and equally clearly bad colleagues, or departments, or companies. Gradations between "black" and "white" are not available. Splitting has the psychological function of protecting good objects from the influence of bad objects. The good objects are kept "pure" in order not to endanger their quality. At the relationship level, however, not only in professional contexts, splitting leads to the fact that the people concerned often have to accept a series of relationship losses. If a positively occupied colleague disappoints them, then they "lose him" to the negative side and can no longer perceive his advantages due to a lack of ambiguity tolerance.

Projection: In projection an individual shifts his own intrapsychic conflicts, but also affects, fantasies, impulses for action, and desires into other objects—as perceived by that individual. These can be people, groups, animals, organizations, etc. For example, the projection of destructive or devaluing impulses might lead to the impression: "Everyone has something against me."

Projective identification: Projective identification combines individual defense with communicative aspects. It thus describes an intra- and an inter-psychic process, which can be represented in the following steps: (1) An individual localizes threatening psychological contents via projection in a relationship. (e.g., "I am not

destructive; the department head is destructive"). In this way, they experience a relief and can at the same time keep the projected part in their field of vision. (2) The individual engages in a (non-verbal) communication that leads the other to experience feelings that resemble the projected material. In this way, the receiver's experience becomes more similar to that against which the transmitter defends themselves (the receiver may feel destructive impulses toward the transmitter). (3) Projection and communication create an object relationship in which the sender experiences the receiver as separate enough to feel relieved but also connected in such a way that he can experience his inner states together with another person (Ogden, 1979).

Denial: A fact is negated. Not an inner desire, but the outer reality is denied. For example, changes in the environment are not experienced with the appropriate emotional response: "*My father has died, I am angry with the family as they did not come and see him in hospital*". In contrast to reaction formation, a feeling or an attitude is not replaced by its opposite, but its existence is denied altogether.

Empirical Research

More than 100 years after the above conceptualizations by Sigmund and Anna Freud, there have been many empirical studies dealing with defense mechanisms. Many researchers do not start from one Freudian theory, but rather see Freudian psychoanalysis as a collection of several theories, each of which can be tested individually (Werner & Langenmayr, 2005). However, the view that Freudian theories could be tested at all is not uncontroversial. It stands in contrast to the view that sees Freudian psychoanalysis as a purely hermeneutic art, one which is concerned with the understanding of purely subjective modes of experience (Werner & Langenmayr, 2005).

Operationalization and Assessment of Defense Mechanisms

Weber (2000) noted the problem of the transferability of clinical phenomena of defense into empirical research due to their unconscious nature. The concept of defense is a term of psychoanalytic metapsychology and the behavior in which this defense manifests itself is an observable clinical phenomenon, which is described by the concept of resistance. The underlying defense mechanisms must be speculatively derived from these resistance phenomena. This conceptual separation of defense and resistance results in methodological consequences for empirical research.

The empirical recording and evaluation of defense mechanisms are complicated by different definitions, evaluations, and surveys. For both self and third-party assessments, it is important to operationalize the corresponding defense mechanisms in order to achieve reliability (Mitmansgruber et al., 2011). Various efforts have

been made to operationalize defense mechanisms for the "Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders DSM-V". Such test procedures used to record defense mechanisms can be divided into self-assessment and projective procedures as well as naturalistic approaches.

In self-assessment procedures, such as the Defense Mechanism Inventory (DMI; Gleser and Ihilevich, 1969), participants are asked to express an opinion about stories by ticking the appropriate boxes. Their unconscious motivation, including possible defense formations, is then meant to be indirectly deduced from these answers (quoted from Weber, 2000, p. 32).

Projective methods are another way of assessing defense mechanisms, for example in the "Defense Mechanism Test DMT" (Kragh, 1985). In this procedure, the participants are required to report their associations to ambiguous stimulus material. The basic idea is inspired by depth psychology. It is assumed that unconscious content is reflected in spontaneous associations. One criticism of such tests is that they primarily examine visual perception rather than defense (Weber, 2000). As a result, this projective method is regarded as relatively unreliable, because of low validity, (Weber, 2000). According to Beutel (1998) and Rüger et al. (1990), third-party evaluation procedures for assessing defense mechanisms are considered more appropriate (cf. Weber, 2000, p.33). The advantage of the third-party assessment procedure is that over the course of the interview (in semi-standardized interviews) the interviewer has the opportunity to react directly to contradictions in the statements of the interviewees in order to make the patient's defensive attitude more transparent.

Defense mechanisms can also be studied in naturalistic approaches, using interviews, therapy sessions, and behavioral observations (Werner & Langenmayr, 2005). The advantage of this method lies in the fact that the test subjects do not only have predefined reactions at their disposal. This procedure has higher ecological validity than the recording in test or laboratory situations (Werner & Langenmayr, 2005). Perry and Ianni (1998) also point out that this recording method can be seen as directly derived from Freud's observational approach. The disadvantage of this approach may be its unreliability in the assessment of the data and the problem that the respective interview or observation situation could itself favor the emergence of certain forms of defense (Werner & Langenmayr, 2005).

Empirical Findings

In the context of coaching, there have been no studies on changes in defense functions through coaching, apart from individual case studies (Allcorn, 2006). As a result, our only reference can be transferring findings from psychotherapy research. Various studies show that the individual defense mechanisms can be categorized and arranged hierarchically on the basis of their adaptive functional level (Perry & Bond, 2012). This consensus is recorded in the Defensive Functioning Scale in Appendix B of the DSM-IV-TR (Caligor et al., 2010). Benecke (2014) summarizes that the

effects of different forms of defense (e.g., on physiology or on later professional success) have extensively been investigated empirically and are well documented (see overview papers by Cramer 2006; Hentschel 2004; Werner & Langenmayr, 2005). Empirical results show that defense mechanisms point to certain aspects of the therapeutic process, such as momentary changes in patient communication in conflictual situations (Despland et al., 2001; Perry et al., 2012; cited by Di Giuseppe et al., 2014). Naturalistic studies have shown an improvement of immune function in the course of short-term (Drapeau et al., 2003) and long-term psychotherapies (Perry et al., 2009) as well as in psychoanalysis (Roy et al., 2009). A positive change in defense function could be shown to be associated with positive outcomes in short-term and long-term psychotherapies (Drapeau et al., 2003; Perry & Bond, 2012). We may tentatively assume similar results would occur in coaching.

Collective Defense Mechanisms

Not only individuals but also groups, teams, and organizations form defensive patterns to keep away unpleasant affects (Mentzos, 1988). If the defense takes place collectively, we speak of psychosocial or collective defense mechanisms. The concept of psychosocial defense mechanisms in the work context is based on the consideration that work releases fears, involves a primary risk, and requires the individual to deal with these dangers. Individuals working in safety-critical environments for example must manage employee fears of an accident. However, if fears exceed a certain level, the psychosocial defense will develop. The development of such defense can increase the risk of incidents as risk might be downplayed rather than effectively managed (Giernalczyk et al., 2014).

It is important to note that each culture (organizational, family culture, etc.) has its own specific form of defense. Without appropriate defenses people cannot cope, as it is not possible to maintain constant contact with all of life's risks. Nevertheless, it is essential for groups and organizations to be able to pause and reflect on these issues. This can clarify whether the primary risks are being adequately managed or whether cultural rituals, prohibitions, and commandments are resulting in unacceptable risks being taken by individuals, teams, or families (Giernalczyk & Lohmer, 2012).

Psychosocial defense mechanisms, like individual defense mechanisms, can be subdivided into maturity levels. The more differentiated the defense is, the easier the risk is to manage although factors such as individual personality and organizational structures all have an influence within the complex organizational system. Many organizations temporarily resort to lower defenses such as splitting and projection. When the stress level drops again, they return to higher defense mechanisms.

The collective/institutionalized or psychosocial defense constellations can be considered to be conceptually well understood, but lack empirical studies. Much of the literature is purely descriptive or based on individual case studies.

Team Focus

When working with teams or when a manager aims to understand team dynamics, it is important to understand the group matrix. This matrix consists of the entirety of the current relationships, the transference relationships, interaction patterns, institutional conditions, and collective defense formations. The psychosocial defense has repeatedly attracted our attention in our work with organizations: Instead of focusing on the developmental needs of the institution in the light of the challenges and opportunities of its environment, which inevitably also leads to negative feelings like help- and hopelessness, even in the setting of a progressive and participative leadership, staff members often display a fight-flight-assumption (Bion, 1961/1990). One consequence can be that instead of external challenges being seen as a threat, leadership is now experienced as the threat, because of its seeming desire to be self-centered. This enemy image of leadership leaves the group with at least the illusion of control, since in a continued struggle and wrangling with leadership, more contact with a concrete "enemy" is possible than would be the case in dealing with external challenges. The costs of this collective defensive action are considerable: trust in and loyalty to the leadership are lost and are replaced by mistrust and even paranoia. In many cases, however, the leadership also mobilizes complementary psychosocial defenses. Often feelings of hopelessness and anxiety might be split off and projected into the group of employees. This in turn allows the management to feel itself predominantly task-oriented, hopeful, and trustful toward its superiors or company owners—but the trust in the critical and participative abilities of the employees as a resource is lost in the process (Lohmer & Möller, 2014).

Organizational Focus

For Róheim (1974), culture, including organizational culture, is a key element in compensating for frightening feelings of dependency and helplessness as they originate in early childhood. Culture thereby becomes a system that provides defense and relief possibilities for the individual within the organization. Róheim (1974) emphasizes the compensatory function of culture, whereas Erikson (1999) emphasizes its stabilizing function. In coaching, it makes sense to assume both. Organizations provide both orientation and security, while also creating stress and restrictions (Gehlen, 2009). As a result, employees' as well as leaders' attitude toward their organization is commonly one of ambivalence.

Collective (or psychosocial) defense mechanisms in organizations can be found in phenomena such as trivialization, dramatization, denial, idealization and devaluation, emotion isolation, emotionalization, or rationalization. The analysis of the respective collective defensive formation can be realized in coaching. The aim of coaching is to soften defensive mechanisms and make their rigid forms more flexible

by changing leadership behavior in order to enable the members of the organization to think and act in a way that is appropriate to the situation as a whole.

For example: In a leadership team coaching session, eight division heads commented on the leadership actions of their board members as part of an upward feedback. In a benevolent atmosphere in which the strengths of the Executive Board were first acknowledged, the division heads expressed criticism that the Executive Board would make decisions too late and would not consistently adhere to past decisions. The gestures and facial expressions showed that the atmosphere was tense. One division manager explained that a particular decision had been obstructed by the employee representatives and a lively discussion about absurd and blocking activities of the employees followed immediately. The discussion was accompanied by loud laughter. This turn of events can be assumed to have defended those present against several fears: the division heads' fear of hurting the board members and the board members' fears of losing the followership of their division heads. Jointly, a common enemy, the employee representatives, was fought against. The consequence was a loss of the opportunity to deal with the issue at hand; they gave up the risky endeavor of feedback.

From the coaches' perspective, the task was to draw the group's attention back to this process and to describe what he had observed. In the next step, an interpretation of the process could be offered, redirecting it to the topic of dissatisfaction with decisions and consequences. The group managed to discuss the topic in a concrete setting and keep the potential of hurting someone at a low level.

Conclusion

The discussion of defense mechanisms raises the epistemological question of which psychological phenomena are to be understood as an acknowledgment of reality and which as a defense. For coaching processes, the epistemological concept of the common or intersubjective construction of reality has proven particularly useful. If the coach offers the client or team an interpretation of the defense, then this becomes valid or "true," if and only if it can be accepted by the individual or the team members, if it stimulates further associations and offers new perspectives. Otherwise, it remains only the "truth" of the coach. For the coach, it can be useful to note the rejected interpretation and to check over the course of the further process whether might still be confirmed by the upcoming material. If the coach collects further data, they can venture another attempt at interpretation at a later point in time. But here, too, an interpretation will only be considered "true" if it is accepted by the individual or the team.

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Insights Through Coaching

Felix Müller and Siegfried Greif

Case Example

Rodney, a supply chain manager in a mid-size tech company, returns from a coaching session. As he enters the office, people turn their heads as he radiates positivity and joy. Hannah, his supervisor, approaches him and asks: "Rodney, you look so happy—what happened?" In responding, Rodney shares that the coaching session he just came from was fantastic as he was able to resolve a situation that he pondered about for weeks and for which he could not see a solution. In fact, the situation kept him awake at night and led to generally lower levels of satisfaction and energy. "You know," he continues, "it was one of these Aha! moments when suddenly all makes sense and you wonder why you were not able to see the solution a long time ago! I really thank my coach for making this possible!"

Coaching can enable a wide range of new insights. For example, the new insight of Rodney included how to improve the productivity of his team. He remembers that the coach asked again and again: *"Is there anything more you think or feel or want to say about this?"* The coach did not stop before Rodney found a new and fully satisfying solution. Another example: he suddenly understood why a team member often reacted with inappropriate loud protests when she was asked to meet an important deadline. In the coaching session, the coach helped him to imagine the employee's perspective and suddenly he understood why she might have protested. Below, several coaching methods and additional examples will be described, which

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show how the emergence of new insights into the problem, opening up appropriate solutions, could be facilitated.

Introduction

What Rodney experienced was a moment of insight. In a study by De Haan and Nieß (2015) clients and coaches alike were asked if in their coaching sessions they experienced decisive or particularly impressive moments ("critical moments"). The by far largest number of responses related to new insights or new perspectives.

Often, there are clients who visit coaches because they are stuck and want to find a solution in a deadlocked situation. Like Rodney, they have been thinking about a situation for a long time, applied various forms of analysis, involved colleagues, supervisors, staff, friends, or family, and still could not find a satisfying answer. Then, suddenly, working with a coach, the clients find one or more solutions and walk away highly satisfied—the burden from the impasse has gone and it feels like a heavy rock had been removed.

Other clients come to coaching with a more pragmatic expectation. They expect coaching to support them in achieving their own or externally set performance goals. However, they are surprised when they suddenly have intensive Aha! experiences during coaching that radically change their previous view of events.

What Is Called an Insight or Aha! Experience?

Danek and Wiley (2017, p. 2) refer to classical approaches of Gestalt Psychology and explain an "insight" as "a productive thinking process turning a problem, or 'defective Gestalt', into a solution, a 'good Gestalt'" based on a restructuring of the problem perception. In other words, an "insight" can be understood as subjective certainty of persons that they have suddenly understood a subject or situation, its relationships, causes, and consequences.

Aha! experiences are insights, which occur suddenly, accompanied by surprise and a strong feeling of pleasure and success. Danek and Wiley (2017) found in their study that, contrary to the classical assumption, Aha! experiences can be false, an illusory solution (see also Subramaniam et al., 2009). We, therefore, do not include the correctness of the insight in our definition.

An often-cited classical example of the ecstatic joy that accompanies creative Aha! experiences are exemplified by the story of Archimedes leaping out of his bath, running naked through the streets, and shouting "Eureka!" ("I have found it!"), a perfect idea of how to measure volume size. Rodney, the manager in our case study, is enthusiastic about his new insight when returning to the office after his coaching session. From the coach's viewpoint, this is probably also an enjoyable moment

seeing the value of what they are doing and are affected themselves by the positivity of the client.

Luckily, many coaches seem to be able to support their clients in reaching their goals without scientific knowledge about how insight is created, based on their professional experience. However, like for other topics covered in this volume with which clients may come to coaching, like behavioral change, goal setting, or resilience, it could be beneficial to coaches to understand how they can deliberately support their clients in gaining new insights. Therefore, this chapter describes the state of psychological and neuroscientific research on insights and relates them to several methods already used in coaching. It ends with the post-insight period, i.e., how to move from the enthusiasm and joy of having removed the rock into implementation.

Fixedness as Impasse Creators

Greif and Riemenschneider-Greif (2018) describe insights as inner-psychic processes expressed in verbal statements of inspiration by the client in a coaching process, which *might* lead to action by the client during or after the coaching conversation. Often, insight is gained by looking at a situation from a different angle without changing the parameters of a given situation. This often leads to a big surprise on the side of the client: in the case example, Rodney explained to his supervisor how it helped him to look at the situation from the employee's point of view.

If it is that easy, one might wonder why people do not find the solution by themselves. What keeps them from moving to a different viewpoint? In Gestalt psychology, the phenomenon is referred to as "fixation" or "fixedness" (Duncker, 1945). "Functional fixedness" develops by someone using a specific object in a habitual manner and, thus, assigning a certain function to an object or generalized behavior pattern to a person, as we would also assume. One example might be a person who needs a weight as an object but fails to recognize that the hammer lying next to them may also serve as weight since they mentally perceive a hammer as the tool to hit a nail with. In the case example, the client had generalized his view that his employee always would protest against his demands and could never be stopped by a different way of talking to her.

The tendency for functional fixedness is already acquired by children at age seven (German & Defeyter, 2000) and can be deeply embedded in the behavior patterns by the time a client shows up for coaching. This is possibly due to the fact that in many cultures the preferred strategy for dealing with challenges and problems is to move into the analysis mode: look at the problem, dissect the variables, compare with previous experiences, and the solution is there. However, as shown before, this is exactly what Rodney did but found no satisfying answer to his problem. Analysis, while powerful as long as the current problem has some similarities to past problems solved successfully, seems to have its limitations, since fixations hinder us from

creating new insights (Kounios & Beeman, 2015). Thus, it can be said that it is not unusual that functional fixedness keeps clients from finding the solution.

Overcoming Functional Fixedness

The deliberations thus far have shown that often not a lack of knowledge is keeping the clients from solving their problem but the inability to move into a different perspective on the problem. Kounios and Beeman (2015) state repeatedly that people, in general, know much more than they think themselves but are often blocked by fixations. The decisive question then becomes how we can, in coaching and other situations, activate these resources if access to them is blocked by functional fixedness. Proverbially "open mindedness" is necessary for new insights and new solutions. Below we will describe coaching methods, which may unlock fixedness and raise the chances of emergence of new insights or Aha! experiences.

Neuroscientific Research

Over the past two decades, neuroscientific research using functional magnetic resonance imaging has increased. Two approaches relate to the facilitation of new insights: the model of the "default mode network" and the "cognitive neuroscience of insight" research of Kounios and Beeman.

The Default Mode Network

The neurologist Marcus E. Raichle (2010) has assumed that the human brain has two dominant states, a task-oriented state for conducting analytical work and a state, called "default mode," which is more like resting or calming down. The major contribution to research was that when calming, the brain is by no means inactive but shows strong activity by linking various parts of the brain in the "default mode network." Based on further research (Andrews-Hanna, 2012) the default mode is involved in various functions like *references to the self* (autobiographical information, self-reference, emotion of one's self) and *thinking about others* (theory of mind, emotions of others, moral reasoning, social evaluation, social categories). Furthermore, being in the resting state of the default mode network allows humans to *remember the past, imagine the future, access episodic memory, and understand stories*, all factors that distinguish humans from other species and allow them to take on a different perspective.

Neuroscience also has shown that one can be only in one state at a given time, i.e., either the task-oriented or the resting state. As the name implies, the default mode of

our brain is the unfocused state to which the brain tends to return after tasks that require concentration. (The "resting state" may not be that restful for the brain but it is derived as opposite to performing a task that demands intensive conscious brain activity.) Thus, if one moves into the analysis mode, one also changes into the task-oriented mode, which inhibits gaining new insights into unknown territory (Bossons et al., 2015). The task-oriented mode, as the name implies, is a "diligent machine" to perform (known) tasks but is not suited for finding solutions that are new for the person. It actually does not even properly allow us to reconnect to scattered past experiences, since only the default mode network state facilitates the connections to these memories. Instead of spending more time in analysis, the solution often lies in stimulating our brain to move into the default mode. If we need new insights, we must resist the urge to always move immediately into the task-oriented mode.

Cognitive Neuroscience of Insight

Referring to the Gestalt psychological observations on Aha! experiences, Kounios and Beeman (2014, 2015), Kounios et al. (2006); Subramaniam et al. (2009) have combined cognitive psychological and neuroscientific research on the activation of brain regions in the preparation phase and after experiencing new insights. In their studies, the subjects had to solve a series of simple but creativity-demanding word association problems. They had to find a solution word, which could be combined with each of three given words, e.g., pine, crab, sauce. Here a solution word would be "apple." They applied functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging and asked the subjects, to press a button, to indicate, if they felt that the solution had been achieved by an insight (defined before by prior instruction as a sudden awareness of the solution). Their research confirms that insights arouse very quick and strong reactions in specific brain regions (especially the dorsal anterior cingulate cortex, dACC, showed a sustained increase in the preparatory interval and a stronger activity in the moment of insight). As expected, insights spontaneously activate positive feelings up to elation (Kounios & Beeman, 2014, 2015). Subramaniam et al. (2009) hypothesize, that insights involve greater cognitive control and restructuring processes, activating the dACC. They refer to the neuropsychological theory and research of Kuhl (see chapter: Affect and action regulation), which assumes that positive affect facilitates insight and cognitive restructuring and less perseveration or fixedness. Tik et al. (2018) found for the first time, that in these experiments a deeper part of the brain that generates the mood-enhancing chemical dopamine "lit up." They identified the nucleus accumbens as a critical hub linked to this lightbulb moment.

Future Research on Real-World Problem-Solving

The neuropsychological research on insights is stimulating. However, it is questionable whether the scientific evidence from simple word association problems are generalizable to the new insights or Aha! experiences in coaching. Sarathy (2018) discusses how to include "real world problem-solving." He explains how different brain regions are activated in focused problem-solving using analytical thinking and, in contrast to this, in defocused problem-solving with leaky attention "in divergent exploration processes." In the latter, stimuli in the environment, seemingly irrelevant information, can be noticed, which can result in creative solutions and Aha! experiences. He mentions "that here the ,default mode network" is activated. In his dual-process model, different systems are activated. After being in this defocused mode, the brain normally returns to the focused mode of problem-solving, using the new insight. The complex model of Sarathy allows us to take a glance at the current complex neuroscientific discussion and to expect fascinating future basic research in this field.

Role of External Stimuli or Nudges

Several aspects help to overcoming functional fixedness: a mutually supportive relationship, an activation of resources (see chapter: Success factors in coaching), the self-efficacy convictions of the clients (see chapter: Coaching relationship), spacious environments, and patience for extended reflection. Yet, Greif and Riemenschneider-Greif (2018) do not see these aspects as sufficient to fully overcome functional fixedness.

Already a century ago, the German Gestalt psychologist Wolfgang Köhler (1921) showed that it takes external action to trigger an insight: Working with anthropoid apes, he demonstrated that not only humans but also apes learn through insight and not just by thoughtless trial and error, as other scientists expected. In his experiments with chimpanzees and Orang-Utans, he noted that the most intelligent chimpanzee, Sultan, was fishing for bananas outside of his cage by putting two short poles together to form one long pole. However, this solution was not developed by himself alone. Rather, his keeper put his finger into the hole at the end of the poles. Sultan imitated and this stimulated him to stick the second rod into the hole and to put the rods together to a long rod. Immediately he actively used the long rod to fish for the bananas. Sultan then used this new insight to fish for other items and was able to repeat putting the rod together (Köhler, 1921). Similarly, a more recent version of Duncker's candle-and-box experiment of 1945 (where participants were asked to mount a candle on a wall using a box of tacks and a book of matches so that it can burn normally and without dripping), Frank and Ramscar (2003) gave a written description of the experiment to undergraduate students at Stanford. When the word 'box' was underlined, the success rate went up significantly. The authors concluded

that underlining "box" triggered the students to look at this item and its potential uses in more detail so that they had the insight to turn the box into a candle holder by fixing it with a match on the wall. Gestalt psychology refers to this capacity of the human to 'restructure' information, where a hint stimulates a new insight or a few dots or lines suffice so that people create a meaningful new image (the "Gestalt") by a kind of "completion dynamics" (Kriz, 1997).

Similarly, Kounios and Beeman (2015) refer to intervention studies showing that if another person helps to perceive all elements of an unsolved problem in their entirety or to mention untypical uses of these elements, this suffices for overcoming functional fixedness. Thus, a trigger event, though small, seems to be required to move beyond the impasse. Greif and Riemenschneider-Greif (2018) point out that insights cannot be enforced. Their emergence can be facilitated by hints or impulses to change perspective.

In addition to hints, which stimulate new insights, other hints, which stimulate behavior changes, could be called "nudges." Nudging was introduced by Thaler and Sunstein (2008, pos. 154) in the field of health behavior. They define "nudges" as objects or stimuli, which "alter people's behavior (...), without forbidding any options or significantly changing their economic incentives." The authors explain: "To count as a mere nudge, the intervention must be easy and cheap to avoid. Nudges are not mandates. Putting the fruit at eye level counts as a nudge. Banning junk food does not" (Thaler & Sunstein, 2008, pos. 154).

In the case of coaching, hints and nudges can be introduced by the coach. The stronger the fixedness of the client, the more the coach is required to stimulate the client to reflect on potential fixedness and emotional blockings. Below we will come back to the question of how nudging can be transformed to use it in coaching.

Fostering Insight in Coaching

The Setup of the Coaching Session

From the previous discussions in this chapter, one can derive several suggestions on how to foster insights in coaching and what a coach can consider facilitating the emergence of insights. First, insight needs a calm, accepting, and reflective atmosphere for conversation. In general, coaching sessions are a refuge and space for reflection and thinking with the aid of a sympathetic expert in problem-solving (see chapter: Self-reflection in coaching). However, this alone might not suffice. While the name 'default mode' points to the fact that this mode is the brain's default setting, people in modern societies are often a "learnt default" task-oriented mode, at least once they enter their business environment (they may be daydreaming in the default mode during their commute). Therefore, the coach's first task is to co-create with the client a relaxed atmosphere and open minds for divergent reflections and explorations.

The Role of the Coach

Co-creation of a calm, accepting, and reflective atmosphere for the coaching conversation is a basic competence of coaches. As seen before, it additionally takes just a small hint by the coach to stimulate the client into taking on new perspectives or a nudge that stimulates new behavior. The nudge can be very subtle as shown in the example of Maier (1931). In his two-cord puzzle, he attached two cords at the ceiling of a room just far enough apart that, while holding on to one cord, you could not reach the other one. One of the objects lying around was a pair of scissors that could be used as a weight so that one cord became a pendulum and could be grabbed. When participants ran out of ideas, Maier tried various ways of stimulating them to use the scissors as weight. He found out that accidentally touching one cord and making it swing easily sufficed for the participants to find the new solution through insight. Thereby, their thoughts went beyond their functional fixedness from scissors as tools for cutting (which could only make the cords even shorter) to another, situationally more productive use.

Maier obviously was looking for the one correct solution and his nudge led the participant in that direction; in coaching, however, coaches do not know the "appropriate solution" and must always keep in mind that the clients are the owners of the problem who decide on the goals and the solutions. Therefore, such stimuli are only available as open questions or suggestions for further search, which might enrich the views of the client. The client remains in the role of actively deciding on the themes and goals directing the process. The following section describes several methods used in coaching, which according to practical observations support the emergence of new insights and Aha! experiences.

Approaches in Coaching to Gain Insight

As mentioned before, gaining insight is both one of the key needs expressed by clients as well as outcomes achieved in coaching. This section links the psychological and neuroscientific foundations described above to some approaches and tools that are used in coaching, which may facilitate the emergence of new insights and Aha! experiences.

Time to Think

The Time to Think approach has been developed by Nancy Kline (1999) recognizing that the quality of thinking influences strongly what we do. Time to Think starts with the client being asked to express the topic of the session ("What do you want to think about?"). Then, the coach asks: "Is there anything more (you think or feel or want to

say about this)?" and holds the space while the client is expressing their thoughts and feelings. Once the client runs out of thoughts and feelings, they say "I am done" and the coach then asks again the same question: *"Is there anything more you think or feel or want to say about this?"* This process can continue for longer periods until the client states that no more thoughts or feelings are emerging (Kline, 1999, p. 147).

From the point of view of gaining insight, we assume that this approach could allow the client to loosen the functional fixedness, since the coach continues to ask to think about feelings and explanations, until eventually, they discover new perspectives by themselves. This persistent questioning is partly similar to Socratic questioning, in which observations and explanations are asked further and further until an insight is gained. Yet, the Time to Think approach allows the client to move to and stay in the default mode, since there are no triggers tempting them to move into the task-oriented state while Socratic questioning might easily induce clients into the task-oriented mode because here the coach has to deliver more and more new content within their questions. This is the real power of always repeating the same question: if a *new* question would be asked, the brain might move into task orientation since it must understand what is being asked. As surprising as it is for many clients that they are repeatedly asked the same question, the harmonious swinging between coach and client relaxes the client and soon they get used to this approach.

Once this first phase is completed and everything has been said, Time to Think moves to looking at the challenges or goals the client wants to work on in the current session.

Circular Questioning

"Circular questioning" is a distinctive "systemic" questioning method originating in family therapy (Schlippe & Schweitzer, 2019). Clients who report problems with other persons are asked to afterward take the perspective of these others onto themselves, "to put themselves into their shoes," thus completing the interactive circle (see also chapter: Understanding in coaching). It is particularly suitable for reconstructing conflicts of a client with other people (in the family or at work). In a joint reconstruction and analysis of the interactions and conversations from the memory of the client, mutual influences in their interactions are to be described and "self-referential" relations that are circularly related to themselves are to be taken into account (Simon & Rech-Simon, 1999). This helps to find out what expectations the other persons hypothetically develop following from the client's own behavior and what subsequent behavior the client expects from the person. Such mutual "expectation-expectations" or "assumptions about how one is likely to be seen by others and how the other person in turn believes he or she is likely to be seen make up the respective social system." (Schlippe & Schweitzer, 2019, p. 95 ff.). They are assumed to be effective in every interaction but according to Schlippe and Schweitzer they are often only diffusely felt. If coaches verbalize them with clients in a

circular way, our observations in coaching conversations show that this change of perspective often results in spontaneous Aha! experiences and plans to change one's own behavior. The method could have been used in the Rodney coaching example for a better understanding of why a team member reacted with inappropriate loud protests.

The ABCDE Model in Cognitive-Behavioral Coaching

Albert Ellis (1962) developed the ABCDE model and resulting method for psycho-therapy, but it is today also very prominent in the field of coaching. It is especially valuable if the coach realizes that their client's emotions or behavior are negatively dominated (or fixated) by unhelpful or irrational beliefs. In the conversation with the client, the coach focuses on these beliefs and explores together with the client how these keep them from achieving their personal goals. Ellis starts the method with A standing for the description of the Activating event by the client, then together they analyze B for the Beliefs about the event and move to C, the emotional, physiological, and practical Consequences.

Usually, when confronted with an activating event, human beings directly move into consequences: e.g., a person suffering from presentation anxiety is likely to move within milliseconds to the consequences and imagine everything that can go wrong, if asked to do a presentation. Steps ABC suffice to gain new insight: the beliefs B include beliefs that are based on functional fixedness. Making clients aware of how their beliefs affect their thoughts and feelings about the consequences may allow them to loosen the functional fixedness, relax and find an answer to the question "Why don't I behave differently?" Together with the relaxed and reflexive atmosphere of the coaching, this may help the client to open their mind to new insights. Ellis added steps D (Disputation and modification of the unhelpful beliefs) and E (Effective new approach when dealing with the activating event) to the model, which can productively be used as following coaching steps.

The Miracle Question in Solution-Focused Coaching

Whereas the ABC model looks at the beliefs that keep people getting stuck, solution-focused coaching moves the reflections away from the obstacle and invites the client to imagine the future as another way to remove the block. In doing so, it uses the truly human capacity of imagination by envisioning the desired positive future. For that move, De Shazer (1988) invented the *miracle question,* asking the client to imagine that they go to sleep and when they wake up the other day, a miracle happened and their challenge has been solved. By elevating the client toward a desirable future, the stress of the limiting factors (the fixedness) and the often binary black-and-white assessment of their situation ("everything is miserable!") is

removed and the clients are put into a positive and reflective mood state. Describing this future in all details gives the client the opportunity to dream and subsequently discover how much of this dream is either already present or can be achieved with minimal changes. Greif and Riemenschneider-Greif (2018) point out that for certain clients the idea of a *miracle* happening could be a too childlike concept and that the miracle question should not be used repeatedly. In the field of problem-solving techniques, a similar method is known as "working backwards" (Anthony, 1966) and can be used here without referring to a miracle taking place.

Summarizing Different Hint Techniques in Coaching

We assume that stimulating new insights and even Aha! experiences in coaching are partly possible by the co-creation of a relaxed coaching atmosphere and a positive affective mood. In coaching, it is important to stimulate open-mindedness and divergent thinking, a new cognitive experience, best done in the default mode according to Sarathy (2018). Divergent thinking is often necessary to find new and appropriate solutions to continued and hardened problems. A calm and relaxed atmosphere is important for coming into the default mode but it is often not sufficient to leave the beaten track. As we have learned from classical Gestalt Psychology and as Kounios and Beeman (2015) repeatedly point out, fixedness is often a barrier that hinders coaching clients to find a solution. Yet, little hints of the coaches can help the client to unlock the fixation and develop a new insight. In the coaching approaches described above, the coaches use different types of refined questions, where the unusual formulation and sequence of questions stimulate attention and new insights. In the Time to Think approach, the coach repeats the same question again and again and stimulates a deeper and deeper self-reflection. Circular questions encourage reflection on other persons' views and expectations and on one's own interaction behavior. The ABCDE model starts with questions on activating events, irrational beliefs, and their consequences for the person. Here the coach explains the model and gives hints, how irrational beliefs can be identified and how they can be overcome by the client. In contrast, the miracle question completely relies on the views and experiences of the client but starts with the unexpected message that the goal has been reached successfully and the question of what had happened in the last step before reaching the goal. The approaches differ but have in common that they raise the probability that the clients develop new insights or even Aha! experiences. Certainly, there are many more approaches in coaching, which for different clients, goals, and solutions could stimulate the emergence of insights.

Beyond the Aha! Moment

If in addition to insights behavior changes are necessary and if functional fixations are strong, 'nudging' seems to be a promising approach for coaching. As in the definition of 'nudging' as an easy and cheap to avoid intervention, it is important not to delimitate the decision what to decide. However, nudging implies to give a person a little push to start to act as they themselves wanted it. In the approaches above, it might be sufficient after the circular reconstruction of the perspectives and hypothetical expectation-expectations to ask the client to observe the observations and interactions with the other person in the next meeting and to report their self-reflections. This normally makes it difficult for the client not to change the behavior, but what they will do and how the interaction partner will react is not completely predictable. In the ABCDE model, the last two steps could be interpreted as a kind of nudging by the coach, since he disputes and stimulates unhelpful beliefs with the client and the development of an effective new approach. Even in the approach of De Shazer, who claims not to influence the client, the coach prompts the client to find solutions, and if this turns out to be difficult reinforces to be content with small changes.

One way of looking at what happens when insight is gained and followed by nudging is the W^3 liberating structure (Lipmanowicz & McCandless, 2010) that differentiates three steps of problem-solving and moving into action: 1. What? 2. So what? 3. Now what? Exploring the problem afflicting the client is the "what?" of step 1 and insight is the "so what?" step 2., Reflecting about the "now what?" in step 3 clearly could be called 'nudging': *"Now that I know more than before through insight, how does this change what I think and feel what I can do. . .?"* While it is important to move into action, the coach may give the client time and space in the actual coaching session to enjoy the insight by ending the session and previewing that in the next session, they will look into the "now what?" consequences of the insight.

More research is needed which examines how new insights can be facilitated through hints and nudging by questions with the coaching methods described above and similar ones. To start such research and to enable coaches and clients to take part in a kind of action research, Greif and Riemenschneider-Greif (2018) propose that coaches ask each client several questions:

1. Did you have an aha-moment or an insight in today's session?
2. If so: please describe briefly the new insight—what was new or special for you?
3. Was it more like a flash of insight or did it go deeper?
4. What feelings did you have?
5. If you remember the moment before the insight, what happened in the coaching session? What happened within you? Have there been stimuli by the coach?
6. What do you learn from the new insight? Is anything changing for you or your environment?

The results of such systematic questions can be reported at conferences and stimulate further research into the role of insights through coaching.

Another key aspect in the "post-Aha!" phase is that the joy of having found a solution slowly disappears, reality kicks in, and the internal critic becomes vocal. Oettingen (2014), in a summary of existing research on fostering positive goal fantasies, noted that exclusively positive fantasies about reaching a future goal do not increase goal commitment and goal achievement but even may reduce them. A failure following an initial naive optimism affects the client's self-efficacy convictions and motivation negatively. Therefore, it is important to prepare and support clients in mastering possible challenges on their way to reaching their goals.

Conclusion

Gaining new insights is an important and frequent experience for the clients in the process of coaching. Such insights can be very satisfying and induce a feeling of excitement in the case of an Aha! moment. In some cases, they directly stimulate behavior changes or open new views, which can be useful when planning future changes. Adding more recent findings from neuroscience to more traditional psychological theory gives a broader picture of how insight is generated. By understanding the psychological and neurobiological processes, and using hints and nudges or other suitable methods which enhance the chances for new insights to emerge, coaches can actively support the generation of new insights in their coaching work. As further evidence from neuroscience and psychology research emerges, one can expect further insights that can benefit coaches and clients alike.

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Interaction as a Basic Theme in Coaching

Wolfgang Scholl and Sebastian Kunert

Introduction

Interaction almost always has a close relationship to communication, both are often difficult to separate; in general, communication is mainly used to describe the exchange of information, whereas interaction is more concerned with the exchange of actions. Interaction can be viewed from an experience perspective, as well as from an analytical-structural perspective. However, the terms are often used interchangeably by many writers. We will start to explore the topic by offering a case study.

Case Study: Part 1

When Peter enters his first coaching session, he is upset. He shows signs of exhaustion, helplessness and frustration. Peter founded his own architecture firm 15 years ago. At this time, the world still seemed to be ordered. His employees were well-disposed towards him, there was a good atmosphere, knowledge was exchanged, mutual trust was established, and even some private friendships were formed. Today the picture has flipped. His environment seems to have conspired against him. The economic well-being of the company depends on him. His employees are only working to the rules, there is little discretionary work and there is a feeling of resentment. Peter said, "*It's like the office has taken on a life*

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of its own that I can no longer control. If my company is like a gear box in which each of my employees has to function like a cogwheel, then things are really sticking and grinding at the moment!" In the meantime, the firm's clients also feel that there seem to be problems. Peter is increasingly impatient and easily angered. In addition, he has recently started to show physical complaints, back pains and headaches which add to his problems. Peter's decision to seek a coach was driven by his wife, who urgently told him that something had to change.

The Perception of Interaction

In many cases, clients report experiencing interaction processes that have in some way become a problem for them. Their interactions, like their non-verbal and verbal communication, are always shaped by their emotions. These become impulses for action (Scholl, 2012).

Bales and Cohen (1982) developed an observation system of interaction in groups. The system includes these three dimensions:

1. *Positive/friendly—negative/unfriendly*,
2. *Upward/dominant—downward/submissive* and.
3. *Forward/instrumentally controlled—backward/emotional expressive*.

Wish et al. (1976) analysed different relationships in different situations and obtained three similar dimensions:

(1) *Cooperation*, measured as friendliness versus competition, distinguishing primarily between close friends and married couples versus political enemies and economic competitors; (2) *Dominance*, measured as autocratic versus submissive, distinguishing primarily between masters versus servants and parents versus children, with business partners and close friends ranking in the middle between these two poles;

(3) *Intensity*, measured as involved, emotional versus neutral, distinguishing parent-child relationships versus distant relatives or acquaintances.

Other terms have been used to describe these three dimensions including: *valence/communion, potency/agency* and *activity/arousal*. The different terms suggest differences in content, but a closer review suggests close parallels. These three basic dimensions will therefore be referred to as *communion*, *power,* and *activation* (Scholl, 2013). The two most central qualities of interaction, communion and power, are shown in Fig. 1.

Drawing on this work, Schermuly and Scholl (2012) developed an observation system for these two dimensions, which can be extended to the third dimension of activation, if necessary (Schröder et al., 2013).

In reviewing this model, how can we make sense of Peter's interactions? Peter no longer perceives his employees as positive and cooperative, as he did in the past. Instead, he sees them as rejecting and hostile, and on other occasions as in a stronger position. He himself (re)acts with hostile feelings, sometimes frustrated or angry,
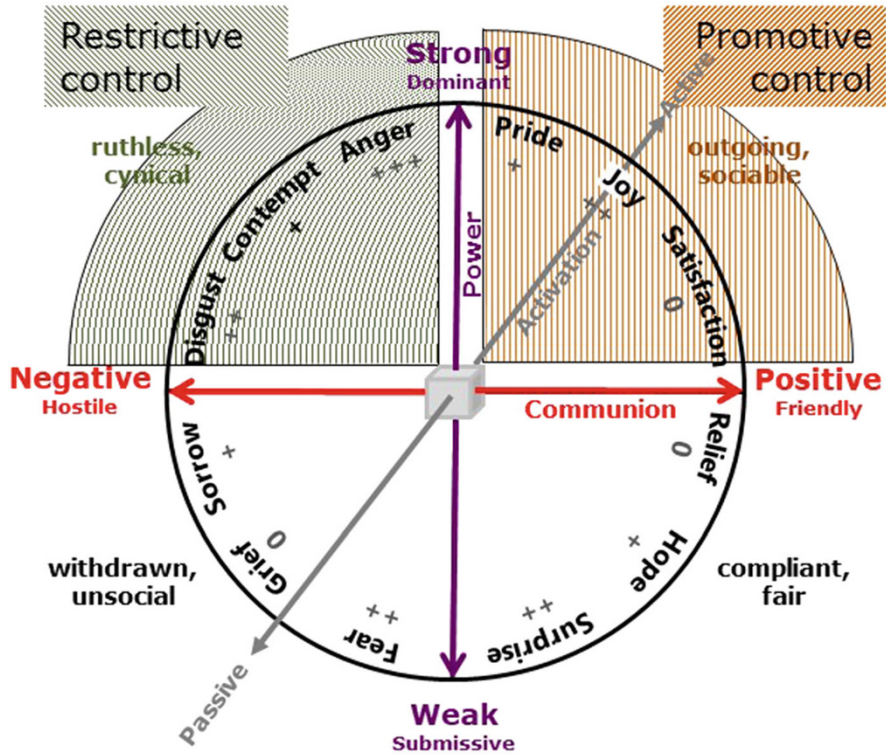
Fig. 1 Central qualities of perception and interaction

other times, sad and worried. The core problem here: The interaction takes place on the negative side by both actors, which generates further negative reactions.

Basic Problems of Cooperation

Two basic problems emerged in research on cooperative relationships: The first is linked to the Communion dimension (Scholl, 2009). People who have similar attitudes and interests usually find each other likeable and can work together well and without much friction (Heider, 1958). Because they see the world in a similar way, they will also be less likely to get into arguments or disputes. They will confirm each other's general beliefs because they see many things in a similar way, and do not fear conflict or challenges to their self-esteem (Scholl et al., 2018). However, the changing nature of work has furthered the insight that diversity in team membership can improve organisational decision making, offering alternative perspectives and reducing groupthink (Janis, 1982). While this brings benefits in ensuring that divergent perspectives are considered, communication becomes more difficult and disputes and conflicts occur more easily. In some situations, this can slip into

negative interaction sequences. A curvilinear relationship between similarity of attitudes and learning can therefore be assumed (De Dreu, 2006; Driver & Streufert, 1969; Meyer & Scholl, 2009). Closeness creates a comfortable environment, but at the same time, it limits the learning of new perspectives.

The second basic problem of cooperation concerns the issue of the power dimension (Scholl & Looss, 2018). If someone has power over others, then this potential can be used in different ways. If it is used to push through one's own interests against those of others, then we speak of an exercise of power or *restrictive control* (upper left sector in Fig. 1). However, if the interests of the other(s) are respected or even promoted, we speak of influence or *promotive control* (upper right sector in Fig. 1). The difference between promotive and restrictive control is often neglected such that the use of power often gets a negative touch although already as children we all made experiences with (hopefully frequent) positive and (hopefully rare) negative forms of parental power. This difference between positive uses and negative uses of power has been emphasised by a few researchers, e.g. Etzioni (1968), McClelland (1970), Scholl (1999). For restrictive control, more harsh, restrictive bases of power are usually used, such as positional power, punishment or situation control, whereas for exerting promotive control, more soft, conducive bases such as information, expertise or referent power are often used (Scholl, 2012; Schwarzwald et al., 2001). In contrast to promotive control, the exercise of restrictive control has negative consequences for all those involved: those affected suffer disadvantages, their self-esteem is violated, they either try to exercise counter-power or resign when they see no chance and the relationship deteriorates. Those in power try to justify their actions, devalue those affected and themselves and are thus morally corrupted (Kipnis, 1976). Above all, the reactions of both sides are bad for an open discussion, which might lead to a better understanding and resolution. Ultimately, this reduces the effectiveness of cooperation (Scholl, 1999, 2012; Scholl & Riedel, 2010). We would thus argue it is advantageous for everyone to exert promotive instead of restrictive power as far as possible.

Case Study: Part 2

While employees, suffering under a leader whom they see as autocratic, may find their way to coaching, managers like Peter tend to be less reflective about their own actions (Mitchell et al., 1998). Peter regards his environment as the problem. He has ignored his own shares in the interaction and how changing his behaviour could lead to different outcomes. In his description, Peter places himself above his employees, attributes successful outcomes to himself and attributes negative consequences to the inability of others. Here, a self-reinforcing mechanism with the elements *self-efficacy perception—self-serving attribution—more exercise of power* and the same sequence starts anew. At the same time, power can act like a drug that reveals its dark sides with years of use. It does not let go of its wielder, because critical feedback is increasingly lacking, which could counteract the abuse; because distrust and

overstraining increase due to isolation, fear, and the feeling of sole responsibility. This leads to a parallel self-reinforcing mechanism through *paranoia—foreclosure—social isolation* and again from the beginning.

At the end of such processes, a *Dark Triad emerges* (Furnham et al., 2013; Kaufman et al., 2019). It consists of signs of psychopathy, narcissism and Machiavellianism. The former describes a cold-blooded personality type which is characterised by high impulsiveness and low empathy. The narcissistic parts include all those thoughts that revolve around one's own role. Clients such as Peter describe themselves in a narcissistic way as the indispensable part of their organisation. Machiavellism characterizes an attitude in which others are seen as a means to an end, *thinking only of their own well-being*. All three overlapping personality traits can be projected into the upper left quadrant of Fig. 1 (Furnham et al., 2013).

Formal Interaction Logic

In addition to these interaction dimensions, which have been derived from the perspective of perception and experience, there is also a formal system developed by game theory, which has inspired empirical research (Cook & Rice, 2006; Gintis et al., 2005; Rusbult & Van Lange, 1996). Many dyadic and social relationships develop formally into social dilemmas which are characterised by inducements to put one's own advantage over the collective benefit. If all or many participants follow such inducements this leads to losses for all instead of advantages for some.

Figure 2 shows a simple example of cooperation between two people (or departments), where the participants are faced with the question of whether they are each working diligently on the joint project or whether they would prefer to concentrate more on other important matters and hope that the other person's diligence will produce sufficient results for the project. Variations on this example show that here, too, the same three dimensions of *communion (cooperation* versus *competition), power* versus *powerlessness,* and *activity* versus *passivity* are at stake (Scholl, 2013).

The dilemma in Fig. 2 implies that the participants find it better if only the other person is diligent (benefit 5) instead of being also diligent oneself (4). However, if the other person has the same idea and does not want to be the sucker (2), then both achieve only a lower benefit (3). To achieve a good and secure cooperative outcome (4), trust must exist on both sides. Building on mutual trust, cooperation leads to better outcomes and becomes more valuable for both, as shown in the matrix at the top right where both value the joint intensive work on the project more highly (5) than defecting and hoping for the diligence of the other (4). In that position there is no longer a dilemma, both can communicate and work together without any major problems creating a *communion* of collaboration. The lower left matrix is an asymmetric one which implies that one side has more *power* than the other (here A over B), because the choice of one side (A) has heavier consequences for the other (B: mean of 4.5 vs 2) than vice versa (mean of 4 vs 4). Finally, the lower right matrix
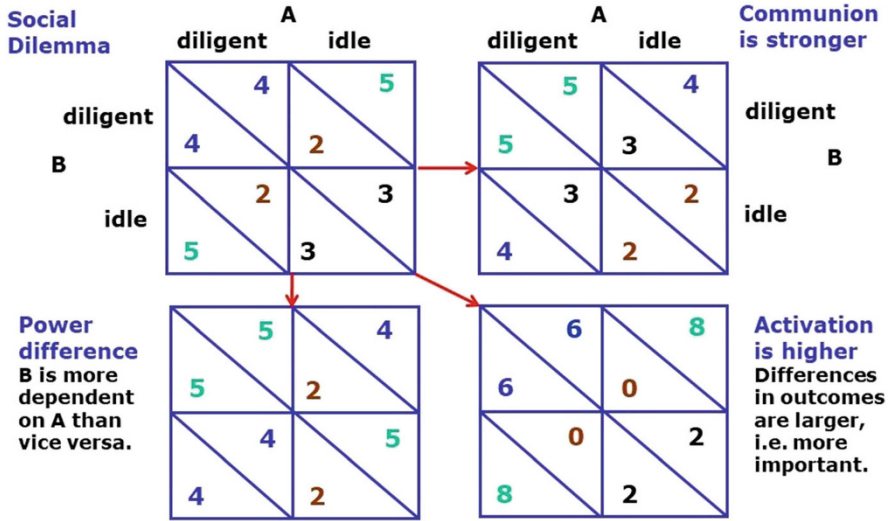
Fig. 2 Variations of a typical dilemma along the three dimensions: Communion, power and activation

has the same structure than the upper left one but has more extreme values which will create more *activation* on both sides to look for good outcomes and beware of the worse ones. This example shows that all collaboration situations can be formalized into matrices that contain specific grades of communion, power and activation.

The Importance of the Three Interaction Dimensions

What does the parallelism between formal interaction logic and emotional perception of interaction behaviour mean in practice? Fundamentally, it is about the coordination of human beings. How can they use the opportunities of cooperation while reducing the risks of exploitation by others? Coordination can be relatively easy if people have similar attitudes and interests which foster communion. When such people come together, they signal their mutual sympathy in a non-verbal way, thus indicating that the cooperation will be relatively problem-free, and they approach the joint work with confidence. However, if someone sees a disinterested, disparaging or even hostile nonverbal expression in the other person, cooperation is postponed or avoided right away. Especially individuals in a weaker position will be alert for such signs of disinterest, hostility, or open threat, and they will minimize contact. Individuals in a stronger position will instead pay attention to their own benefits and are likely to seize any opportunities that arise, including the exploitation of weaker partners (Keltner et al., 2003). Finally, if the results for interaction partners are very different depending on other's choices this will lead to emotional arousal if

negative outcomes seem possible and to more extreme forms of behavioural activation.

Suggestions from Experimental Dilemma Research for Coaching

In coaching, the issue often arises that the client has been exploited or is afraid of being exploited. And usually, it will not be about small things, but about big differences between a possible bad result and a hoped-for good result. This is shown in a high degree of excitement and activation when the conversation comes to these points. The results of dilemma research could be helpful here, showing when cooperation is more likely to occur and when exploitation is more likely (Sally, 1995).

- Cooperation can best be achieved through direct face-to-face communication; this is the best place to find clarification, because the trustworthiness and credibility of the counterpart can be tested to some extent through non-verbal communication.
- A cooperative motivation is favourable, in which not only one's own motives and interests are taken into account, but also other's motives and interests. This is helpful for understanding the other's strivings. The critical question is then what can be learned about the motives of the other side.
- However, if a relationship of trust is disturbed, i.e. one cannot rely on a possible cooperative motivation, then negative, competition-oriented motives are more likely to be attributed to the other.
- The client can be supported in reflecting on the idea of starting anew. To build up a new relationship: "*As you do me, so I do you*" is initiated. And even after a non-cooperative action of the other person, it is often advisable to try again with cooperation and only after another non-cooperative action to react non-cooperatively or to look for other partners (Nowak & Highfield, 2011; Vanberg & Congleton, 1992).
- In manageable groups or departments, you can also make sure that nobody is treated unfair. If someone takes advantage of a special situation to the detriment of another, third parties can react with immaterial punishment (e.g. rejection, loss of reputation) and can demand compensation. In this way, a strong reciprocity norm can be established and cooperation can be ensured (Fehr & Gächter, 2002).
- One major problem is power differentials, because the more powerful tend to exploit the weaker rather than equally powerful partners (Scholl, 2012). If the client is the more powerful, then the negative consequences of restrictively controlling the other can be addressed (Scholl & Looss, 2018). By reflection and role-taking, the advantages of promotive instead of restrictive control can be experienced. Promoting the autonomy of the other will usually lead to stable and fruitful partnerships. If the client is the weaker party, then it is advisable to look

together for the best alternative in order to avoid the threat of restrictive control (Fisher et al., 2011).

Practical Recommendations for Interaction

Many recommendations in the management literature contain suggestions for solving the basic problems mentioned above, yet, without looking on the precise theoretical basis:

- Through appropriate *facilitation* involving different creativity techniques, the diversity of opinions and attitudes is consciously brought to light in parallel work instead of sequential discussion. This helps to foster different opinions without their possibly negative consequences for the relationships.
- *Leadership theories* (Felfe & Elprana, 2018) recommend a cooperative, considerate, participative or transactional leadership style in which power is used as promotive control, respecting the opinions and interests of employees, possibly reinforced by particularly active, inspiring behaviour as in a transformational leadership style.
- The proposals for *conflict management* (Vollmer & Vetter, 2018) generally boil down to not getting entangled in a mutual power struggle, but rather acknowledging and respecting the diversity of opinions and interests, trying to establish and maintain a positive relationship, viewing the conflict as a common problem and seeking better solutions for all in close exchange and mutual promotive control (Fisher et al., 2011).
- For changes in the *structural and procedural organisation,* participatory organisational development is recommended instead of a directive top-down implementation (Bushe & Marshak, 2015; Gebert, 2007).

Why are these recommendations so often ignored and disregarded? Probably (almost) everyone has experienced how productive cooperation looks like. A lot can be learned through discussion, but the above discussed two basic problems of cooperation often impede the transfer of such recommendations into daily practice. Interaction and cooperation in organisations slip into social dilemmas if own opinions and interests are seen as superior and endangered if concessions seem necessary. Then people often change from promotive to restrictive control and relationships deteriorate. Insight and practice learning is necessary to develop more trust in the power of a cooperative attitude that sticks to promotive control and preserves communion.

Case Study: Part 3

Initially, Peter found it extremely difficult to develop distance between himself and his situation. The descriptions of his situation were the main focus. The work alliance with the coach was also repeatedly questioned. After Peter had built up sufficient trust, he gradually opened up to a more differentiated view of his own behaviour. Initially, he was looking for ways to change the situation in his company with incremental changes. However, this did not lead to the hoped-for success. In the end, Peter decided to leave the company, sell his stake and withdraw from active management. His résumé: *It does not work, I am too much habituated in my way of doing business. To retreat from the firm was the only satisfactory solution.*

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Interaction Dynamics in Groups

Nale Lehmann-Willenbrock and Fabiola H. Gerpott

Case Study

It is Monday morning. We are in the weekly meeting of a team working for a medium-sized company. In the company, weekly "check-in" meetings are used to coordinate the allocation of tasks, monitor the quantity and quality of performance, and discuss corporate events relevant to the team. Each meeting is structured along predefined agenda points and happens within a specified time frame. The meeting begins with a review of the absence statistics due to illness in the past week:

- Group leader: *We again did not reach the target of a maximum of two sick days per week. Perhaps we should have another cross-departmental meeting with all employees to discuss how we can further improve the corporate health management activities?*
- Employee 1: *We have tried this at least three times and nothing has changed.*
- Employee 2: *We already had so many ideas for reducing stress at work. But in the end the measures always come to nothing.*
- Employee 3: *We are repeating the same story over and over again in this company: a lot of hot air and nothing happens afterwards.*

The mood of the meeting attendants is dampening. The complaining circle triggers a self-reinforcing downward spiral: instead of constructively searching for possible solutions, the other team members join in the complaining behaviour. Soon the discussion no longer focuses on the concrete problem, but the general handling

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of problems in the company is questioned. A solution is not discussed in this meeting and the problem of absenteeism due to illness ends up on the agenda for the next team meeting.

Group Dynamics as a Starting Point for Coaching Interventions

Groups are dynamic systems that are constantly in motion and constantly changing. The term *group dynamics* was coined by Kurt Lewin (1943, 1948) and describes the changeability and social process character of groups. The term stands for the basic idea that the whole (the group) is more than the sum of its parts (the individual members). Group dynamic processes include phenomena such as cohesion, cooperation, social influence, and conformity (for an overview see Forsyth, 2014).

Research on group dynamics investigates for example the development of group processes over time, the establishment of rules and norms in groups, or the emergence of relationships between individuals within a group, as well as between groups and their organisational environment (Cartwright & Zander, 1953; Forsyth, 2014). The scientific definition of group dynamics must be distinguished from the use of the term group dynamics in general training and coaching practices. The latter frequently focuses on the self-awareness and perceptions of individual participants (often far away from the actual group events; e.g. Konir, 2012) or uses the coaching setting to generate group dynamics instead of reflecting on dynamics in everyday group life (Bachmann, 2015).

This chapter focuses on interaction processes as an essential characteristic of groups (Klonek et al., 2019). The practical example described at the beginning of the chapter illustrates the inherent dynamics of interaction processes in groups: One team member expresses a negative opinion, and another employee responds by adding further points of criticism, whereupon the third meeting participant also joins in the complaint. Recognizing and resolving such recurring interaction dynamics can be the goal of coaching interventions. Depending on their background and the intervention focus of the coach, various methods can be used to address these issues, such as systemic approaches, psychoanalytical methods, role-theoretical analyses or instruments for team diagnosis (e.g. questionnaire on working in a team; Kauffeld, 2004). In most cases, the subjectively experienced reality of group members is taken as a starting point for the development and implementation of interventions. In contrast, this chapter focuses on the objective analysis of the interaction patterns taking place in a group and aims to show how such an analysis can provide useful insights for coaching sessions.

The term coaching is used in the management literature in a variety of different ways and applied in a wide range of contexts. A typical form of coaching focuses on the individual, such that the coach engages with the client through a facilitated conversation to support behaviour change and solve problems specified by the client

(Lippmann, 2013). Team coaching is seen as an extension, in which a group of individuals work with a coach to improve their collaboration in daily working life (Britton, 2015). Accordingly, coaching sessions that focus on the analysis of interaction dynamics in organizational groups can be conducted with an individual manager (individual coaching) or with the whole group (team coaching). The methods for evaluating group interactions that we describe in the next sections can be used for both individual and team coaching.

The Method: Interaction Analysis

How effectively does my team communicate? What works well in our team interactions, and which areas deserve improvement? Are there team members who contribute much to the discussion because they communicate particularly effective? Which behaviours regularly disrupt constructive discussions in our group? How can we achieve a better communication climate overall? These exemplary questions illustrate topics that the coach can discuss with the manager or the whole team (e.g. Wegge & Kemter-Hoffman, 2016). To be able to do so, the (audio or video) recording of team meetings can be analysed by using interaction analysis. In the corporate context the use of video recordings is often unusual. However, results from field research show that a habituation effect occurs quickly, which entails that team meetings recorded with a video camera can provide realistic observation data (Kauffeld & Lehmann-Willenbrock, 2012; Waller & Kaplan, 2018). For the context of an individual coaching, however, it should be considered that there may be concerns if meetings are recorded in which not only the client, but also other people not directly involved in the coaching are present. This can be the case, for example, when a manager is coached and for this purpose wants to video record an interaction with their team. In this case, the team should at least be informed before the recording and receive detailed feedback afterwards.

After the recordings have been completed, the behaviours that have been occurring in the meeting are coded by one (or two, to ensure reliability) independent person(s) to capture their meaning. It is essential to ensure the confidentiality of the video data, not only to enhance the quality of the data, but also for ethical considerations. The coder(s) should sign a confidentiality agreement and the video data must not be disclosed to third parties at any time.

It is recommended to use or adapt an established coding scheme for the coding, as this allows to compare the current data with previous research findings (i.e. established standards). In this chapter, we focus on verbal interactions. In addition, the analysis of non-verbal behaviour such as gestures and facial expressions can also be important, especially to understand affective group phenomena such as the development of group mood (Lehmann-Willenbrock et al., 2011).

Group process research shows that (verbal) communication is essential for understanding functional groups (Gouran & Hirokawa, 1996; Waller et al., 2016). Several coding schemes have been developed that systematically capture various

aspects of verbal interactions in groups, such as the tool for coding discussions (IKD, Schermuly et al., 2010) or interaction process analysis (IPA, Bales, 1950; Beck & Keyton, 2009). Another example of a coding scheme suitable for the team context is the *act4teams* coding scheme, which is widely used in field research and provides information about problem-solving behavior and the emergence of communication patterns in teams (Kauffeld et al., 2009; Kauffeld & Lehmann-Willenbrock, 2012; Lehmann-Willenbrock & Allen, 2014; Lehmann-Willenbrock et al., 2015; Lehmann-Willenbrock et al., 2016). This process-analytical instrument comprises 44 codes, which can be assigned to the four overarching categories (1) task-oriented communication, (2) process-supporting and process-impeding communication, (3) positive and negative socio-emotional communication, and (4) constructive and destructive participation-oriented communication.

Coding means that every single verbal utterance in a team meeting is assigned a code from the respective coding scheme. In doing so, it is recommended to follow the *MESE principle* (*mutually exclusive and collectively exhaustive*). On the one hand, this means that the complete interaction (each statement) receives a code (overall exhaustive coding). On the other hand, there must be a unique assignment, i.e. a statement cannot be provided with several codes (mutually exclusive coding). This procedure ensures that the observed behaviour is fully captured over time and evaluated more objectively than when using participants' self-reports. To code the interactions, it is helpful to use software that enables the segmentation of the audio/video material and allows to save the codes. By means of such programmes (e.g. Interact, Mangold, 2010) the spoken word does not have to be transcribed literally, but the temporal marker (beginning and end of each coded utterance) is stored together with the code. The analysis of the interaction data can be conducted by using "traditional" descriptive data (e.g. analysis of the absolute frequency of certain communication behaviour) or inferential statistical methods (e.g. correlation between verbal utterances and key performance indicators). In addition, sequence analytical methods are applicable, which allows to identify communication patterns (Lehmann-Willenbrock et al., 2013; Lehmann-Willenbrock & Allen, 2018). In this way, it is possible to determine which verbal behaviour triggers certain reactions above chance, and what this, in turn, means for the subsequent meeting interactions.

Since the described procedure for coding a complete team meeting is comparatively time consuming, it can be sufficient for coaching purposes to code only (randomly or specifically selected) team situations. Experience shows that even by analysing individual team meetings, helpful starting points for a detailed discussion, reflection and improvement of team processes can be derived (Söderberg et al., 2009). The diagnosis of dysfunctional and constructive communication cycles is important for increasing the performance of teams, which we describe in the following.

Dysfunctional Interaction Processes in Teams

We define dysfunctional communication as destructive interaction sequences that express complaints about the current status quo, personal rejection and devaluation or status conflicts and denial of changes (on status conflicts see Bendersky & Hays, 2012; on the effects of negative group dynamics see Peterson et al., 1998). Destructive team interactions also include so-called *killer phrases*, which often refer to the person and not the actual topic (e.g. *For you as a modern woman it should be easy to see..'.*) or stifle ideas (e.g. '*That has never worked'!*).

Such statements can be helpful in a few cases to avoid conformist group thinking (Werther & Brodbeck, 2016). Under certain circumstances, they also fulfil the function of finding an easily accessible topic in small talk situations or a common basis for discussion, since often something has to be criticised (Kauffeld & Meyers, 2009).

In most cases, however, destructive statements lead to a deterioration of the group climate and the danger of fest in negative descriptions of the situation. That is, negativity is difficult to prevent and stop in team interactions (Gerpott et al., 2020). The self-reinforcing dynamic of negative statements has been repeatedly proven in research (Kauffeld & Meyers, 2009; Lehmann-Willenbrock & Kauffeld, 2010). *Complaining circles* are not only annoying, they also have a clearly negative effect on the group performance. To illustrate, an investigation of the interaction behaviour in meetings of 59 teams from 19 German companies show a negative relation between the satisfaction with the quality of discussions and the amount of destructive communication. In the long term, this is even reflected in lower corporate success and a lower ability to innovate (Kauffeld, 2006).

One way to prevent and eliminate *complaining circles* can be to address concrete interaction dynamics that have been observed in a team in a subsequent coaching session. The first step is to create awareness about the negative effects of destructive communication and the dysfunctional dynamics triggered by such behaviours. To reach this goal, group members can be encouraged to recognize *complaining circles* in their meeting interaction and to identify possible triggers. The next step is to develop counter strategies. For example, a symbolic stop button (or other objects) can be specified, which each group member can use when noticing dysfunctional communication dynamics. It could also be helpful to develop questioning techniques (*What exactly do you mean by this?*), which defuse *killer phrases* and ask for more precise answers. Furthermore, research shows that process-oriented statements (*Should we move on to the next item on the agenda?*), statements that indicate the goal of the meeting (*Actually*, *it was about the topic...*) and summaries (So *far we have already heard the following...*) can help to stop the collective moaning and create a neutral discussion atmosphere (Lehmann-Willenbrock et al., 2013). Role plays in a safe environment (e.g. the coaching session) offer a suitable area to practice desired new behaviour in team interactions.

Why are groups so susceptible to dysfunctional cycles of interaction? This can be partly explained by emotional contagion mechanisms. These describe the tendency
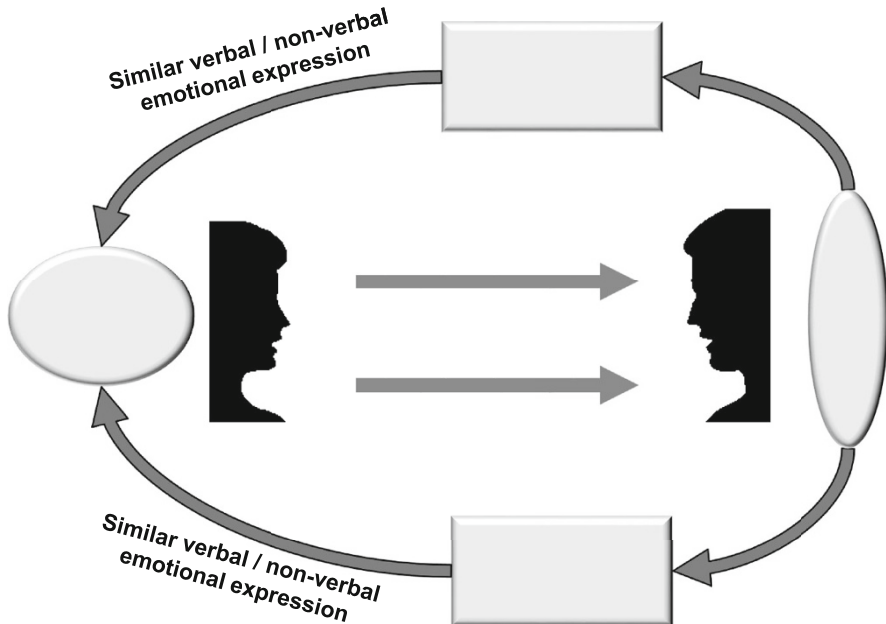
Fig. 1 Illustration of emotional contagion processes in team interactions

of individuals to imitate facial expressions, utterances, gestures and movements of other people and to synchronise their own actions (Hatfield et al., 1994). Emotional states or moods can be transmitted through such mirroring activities. Figure 1 illustrates how verbal and non-verbal behaviour in interactions between team members can lead to emotional contagion. The person on the left makes a negative statement and expresses negative emotions through verbal and non-verbal behaviour. The person on the right hears this and adjusts their emotions accordingly. This can happen consciously (when the negative emotion is consciously observed and shared) or—more often—unconsciously (when the negative emotion is contagious without being consciously perceived and processed). The resulting emotion tends to be similar in both cases, which is illustrated by the verbal and non-verbal behaviour of the person on the right in Fig. 1. This in turn further intensifies the negative emotion of the person on the left.[1]

The good news is that self-reinforcing dynamics cannot only occur for negative behaviours but also manifest in a positive sense. That is, as we will discuss next,

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[1] At this point we refer to negative verbal behaviour, which expresses a pessimistic attitude of the speaker and thus can trigger a transmission of negative emotions to the interaction partner. We, therefore, focus on the general tendency for (positive and negative) emotions to be reflected in the interaction process. Other destructive behaviour such as statements with the aim of personal devaluation, the expression of power or status consolidation can of course also trigger negative emotions in the interaction partner (e.g. fear, anger or helplessness) without imitation.

constructive interaction cycles can also result in a self-reinforcing spiral and contribute to high group performance.

Positive Interaction Cycles in Teams

Positive interaction cycles describe a constructive communication sequence in which the interaction partners' statements focus on a proactive improvement of the status quo or express an interest in change. Everybody knows such pleasant interaction processes: One team member makes a helpful suggestion, another individual builds upon the idea, and you are already in the middle of a creative solution process. Positive statements in team meetings have a clear emotional component: they express optimism, show enthusiasm, goodwill, sympathy, recognition, or hope and can improve the group mood. They thus form a counterbalance to destructive communication cycles. Positive emotions expressed by one team member can trigger positive feelings in the other team members, which can increase team performance (Lehmann-Willenbrock et al., 2017). The self-reinforcing effect of these cycles is also well documented in previous studies. For example, Lehmann-Willenbrock et al. (2011) showed that positive, optimistic statements reflecting an interest in change trigger positive change-oriented statements from other group members. Such statements also encourage support from other group members and reduce the likelihood of destructive behaviours. The more proactive communication circles—i.e. interaction sequences in which an optimistic statement triggers a positive upward spiral in the team—occur, the more positive the development of the group mood over time (Lehmann-Willenbrock et al., 2011).

How can such positive interaction processes be encouraged? Lehmann-Willenbrock et al., (2017) found that solution-oriented statements often trigger optimistic and confident statements (*This sounds great!*; *This could really work.*). In contrast, problem-oriented sentences reduced the occurrence of subsequent positive remarks. In line with these results, Burtscher and Meyer (2014) also show that teams with a *promotion focus* (a proactive orientation focusing on the achievement of goals) are more successful in solving decision tasks than teams that focus primarily on avoiding negative consequences (*prevention focus*). Even though in most cases positive interaction cycles in meetings have a positive effect on performance, it should be noted that *too much of a good thing* is possible. This is the case, for example when a group becomes overconfident, loses contact with reality, and reasonable points of criticism are no longer voiced (Werther & Brodbeck, 2016).

For coaching interventions, these findings imply that the coach should encourage clients to think about concrete behaviours to increase positive energy in team meetings. In individual coaching sessions, managers can, for example work on developing visions and ideas more convincingly and thus demonstrate a transformational or charismatic leadership style—a behaviour that can be learned (Antonakis et al., 2011). Research also showed that the effect of transformational leadership is mediated by a manager's solution behaviour: If a (transformational)

leader in team meetings engages in solution-oriented behaviour, positive interaction patterns of the other team members are encouraged and destructive behaviour such as moaning or criticising others is inhibited (Lehmann-Willenbrock et al., 2015). However, when interacting with their team, managers should still be careful to avoid dominating the discussion with their own ideas and proposed solutions, as the team members may simply agree with the manager's ideas instead of bringing in their own suggestions. To prevent this, the solution orientation of teams can be stimulated by creativity techniques. Furthermore, coaching interventions could focus on finding out how as many team members as possible can be involved in (positive) communication sequences. This is because frequent speaker changes reinforce the effect of positive interaction cycles (Lehmann-Willenbrock et al., 2016) and at the same time prevent that the opinions of particularly dominant team members are accepted only because of frequent repetitions (Weaver et al., 2007).

Conclusion

This chapter describes a number of starting points for coaching interventions based on the systematic analysis of interaction dynamics in a team. Interaction-analytical procedures offer innovative solutions to objectively capture the communication patterns in teams, thereby avoiding that subjective perception of some team members dominate or mislead the coaching intervention. The facilitation of positive interaction cycles and the avoidance of *complaining circles* can be addressed in both individual and team coaching sessions. Ideally, a coaching intervention that is based on an interaction-analytical approach is developed in a comprehensive way, starting with the analysis of an exemplary team meeting, followed by a period of reflection and improvement, and ending with an evaluation of the process and results in order to reach a sustainable change of interaction dynamics.

To achieve this goal, coaches and their clients need to overcome the challenges of data collection and analysis. One possibility to tackle this challenge is the close cooperation with researchers, who may support practitioners with the use of appropriate methods. Such joint projects can provide valid data and new impulses for practitioners. At the same time, the collected data may help to advance existing research findings, and in doing so help to derive evidence-based recommendations for the design and implementation of coaching interventions.

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Language and Meaning as Basic Topics in Coaching

Tobias Schröder and Michael Prytula

> In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. (Joh. 1,1)

Introduction: Language as a Meaningful Tool in Coaching

Coaching serves personal or professional development and is in demand by people when changes to an existing situation are sought. Coaching is often an attempt to develop with the client a vision of oneself as a more satisfied person and to show the conditions to achieve this vision. Thus, a central element of coaching is the construction of meaning: At the end of a successful coaching process, there is a belief system that enables the client to embed their own actions in a perceived social context in a meaningful way.

The main tool for creating, communicating, and changing meaning is language. In a communicative situation, the use of language enables the creation of a representation of the world. The task of a coach is to help the client to create a new symbolic configuration of this representation. It is therefore important for coaching practice to understand the mechanisms of linguistic generation of representations.

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Cognitive Science and Social-psychological Background

Two interacting levels of explanation must be considered. At the individual level, the question arises as to how brains represent semantic relationships and what limiting conditions result from this for linguistic interactions in the context of coaching. However, no human brain can be understood in isolation from its social environment, which is why secondly, the question of embedding meaning in social-cultural structures requires attention.

Semantic Pointers: How the Brain Represents Meaning

Conceptual representations in the brain can be understood as semantic pointers. This refers to data structures in the form of electrical activation patterns in neural populations, which reference each other based on structural similarity (Eliasmith, 2013). Starting from a hierarchical idea of the structure of the cognitive system, different levels of depth of meaning can be distinguished (Fig. 1).

At the symbolic level, the *surface* meaning ("shallow meaning"; Eliasmith, 2013) of a concept results from its combination with other terms in a semantic network. For example, the meaning of the symbolic concept "mother" is given by other symbolic concepts such as "female" or "family" (Fig. 1). According to the theory of semantic
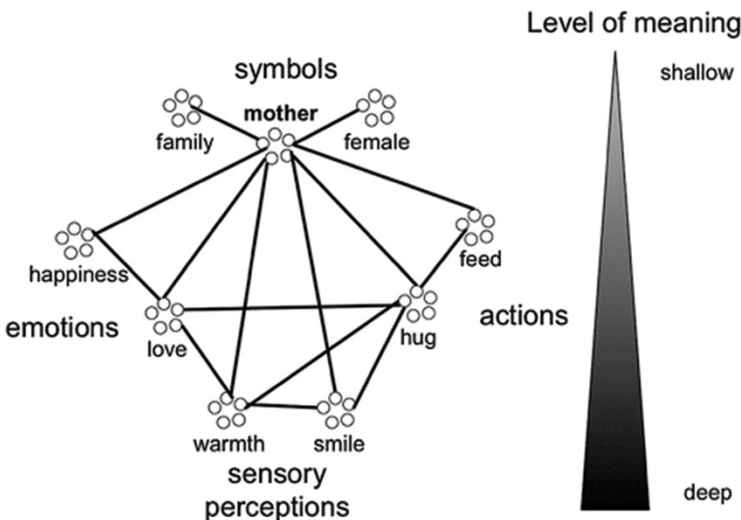
Fig. 1 Meanings as neural networks of semantic pointers. The small circles symbolize that in the brain, meanings are represented as distributed patterns of activity in neuron ensembles. Authorized reprint of Fig. 1 from Schröder and Thagard (2013, p. 260), copyright: American Psychological Association

pointers, a conceptual similarity corresponds to a physical structural similarity of the underlying neural activation patterns.

In order for linguistic symbols to be effective for action, they need not only to reference other symbols but also to refer to experiences in the physical world (Harnad, 1990). Eliasmith (2013) calls this embedding of symbols in neural representations of physical experiences "deep meaning". Thus, the meaning of the exemplary concept "mother" is derived not only from its cognitive associations but also from the reference to affective states experienced with mothers, such as happiness and love, actions like hugging and feeding, as well as sensory perceptions like warmth and smiling (Fig. 1). According to the theory of semantic pointers, symbolic terms are thus compressed representations of richer, embodied representations (on embodiment, see also Storch & Weber, 2021). Conversely, the "translation" of linguistically formed thoughts and intentions into physical action can be seen as a decompression of semantic pointers at the symbolic level of explanation.

Lakoff and Johnson (2003) take a similar view in their cognitive metaphor theory. Accordingly, language is a hierarchical system of metaphors based on each other, which are ultimately grounded in sensory motor experience. Also, Johnson-Laird's (1983) influential theory of mental models and Barsalou's (1999) theory of perceptual symbol systems are integrated and mathematically formalized by Eliasmith's proposal of a cognitive architecture of semantic pointers. Computer simulations can be used to show that such architecture can be used to explain not only basic cognitive functions such as perception, memory or categorization, but also automatic and intentional action and emotion in social contexts (Eliasmith et al., 2012; Kajić et al., 2019; Schröder et al., 2014; Schröder & Thagard, 2013).

The structural relationship between symbolic surface and sub-symbolic deep meanings can be described with the semantic differential, an empirical instrument for quantifying word meanings (Osgood et al., 1957). Words are assessed on quantitative scales whose endpoints are marked with pairs of contrasting adjectives (e.g. "Is a 'mother' rather loud or quiet?"). Numerous empirical studies in numerous languages have repeatedly shown that about half of the variance of word meanings measured in this way can be described parsimoniously using three universally valid dimensions. The first dimension has a hedonic or evaluative character (good, pleasant vs. bad, unpleasant) and is therefore called evaluation (or valence). The second dimension is called potency and refers to power or control (strong, dominant vs. weak, submissive), while the third dimension reflects activity or arousal (active, fast vs. passive, slow).

Interestingly enough—and in line with the idea of a foundation of linguistic symbols in physical experiences—the basic structural dimensions of word meaning discovered by Osgood correspond closely to the dimensionality of human emotions (Fontaine et al., 2007), which is plausible against the background of an evolutionary view of emotions as rapid evaluation and decision-making mechanisms: Is a sudden event good or bad for me (evaluation)? Can I control the situation or not (potency)? Do I have to react quickly or can I remain calm (activity)? Such or similar dimensionality is found in a number of other psychological phenomena. This includes the content of stereotypes, interpersonal personality models, and taxonomies of verbal

and non-verbal behavior in small groups. Scholl (2013) therefore calls the dimensions of the semantic differential socio-emotional basic dimensions of social interaction and argues that they allow a cognitively efficient control of human exchange relations.

As an interim conclusion, it can thus be stated that linguistic meanings not only result from reciprocal symbolic references, but are also characterized by a deep anchoring in basal affective representations, which in turn correspond to an elementary, evolutionary-biologically plausible logic of human action. Here it is already clear why changing meaning references within the framework of coaching is a challenging undertaking. Through verbal interactions between coach and client, a system of representation is to be reconfigured which is not only complex on a symbolic level, but also shows a high degree of resistance to change due to its rich sub-symbolic deep meanings.

Affect Control: How Meanings Encode Implicit Social Norms

The fundamentally social nature of the symbolic structures of meaning results in a further level of complexity. Even though the idea may sometimes cause astonishment in the individualistically shaped culture of Western societies, a coach should know and always point out that our structures of meaning, personal visions and ideas of identity are highly socially shared and influenced by cultural norms. This statement explicitly includes the affective, embodied deep-meaning structures.

Empirical studies have shown that there is great consensus within linguistic communities about the affective meanings of terms measured by the semantic differential (Ambrasat et al., 2014). Such a match has a high functionality because it provides the semantic basis for smooth and resource-saving everyday interactions. Although the attention is often focused on dissent and changes in meaning (think of same-sex marriage disputes), most terms trigger the same affective reactions. Hardly anyone will disagree that a "grandmother" is more friendly than a "rapist" (evaluation), a "president" more powerful than a "child" (potency) and a "government authority" slower than a "startup" (activity). Affective deep meanings thus refer not only to individual, embodied experiences, but also to deep-seated culturally shared ideas of the social order (Heise, 2007).

According to the theory of affect control, affective connotations of terms therefore represent an important source of information for the automatic alignment of individual social behavior with cultural norms (Heise, 2007; Schröder et al., 2016). When people in social situations take on certain roles, they follow their symbolic interpretations of the situation, i.e. they apply linguistic terms to themselves and to the other people involved in the situation. In this way, they take on culturally shaped identities that are in relation to the identities of other people. Such symbolic assignments of identity also pre-structure the affective and sensory experience of the situation at the level of deep meaning. People feel the impulse to perform actions that affectively match the symbolic interpretation of the situation and implicitly

expect such actions from their interaction partners. Such a motivation to experience social cognitions and actions as mutually appropriate and coherent is one of the best documented basic assumptions about human psychology; depending on the author and the temporal context, terms such as striving for a good *Gestalt*, avoidance of dissonance, coherence, balance or consistency have been chosen (Read & Simon, 2012).

Because there is a social consensus on the affective meaning of fundamental social concepts, the psychological striving for consistency is also a motor for aligning individual actions with implicit social norms. Linguistic deviations from the norm are experienced by individuals as aversive, i.e. if one is of a different opinion, then one must also express this through suitable affective differences in the words used, so that those involved can understand the difference. Problems that are relevant in the context of coaching can arise on the one hand from incompatible affective meanings that a person applies to himself and his situation ("I am a good leader. I often have to push around my employees."). On the other hand, new points of view can be opened up by trial affective revaluations (your counterpart sees this positively, how come?).

A classic example is the situation of women in leadership positions, who are often exposed to role conflicts and are still numerically underrepresented even at the beginning of the twenty-first century. An analysis with the aid of affect control theory shows that implicit norm violations with their individual and social consequences can hardly be avoided in this context, if only because of the existing affective meanings of relevant linguistic terms: "Women" are perceived in the German socio-emotional sphere as pleasant (evaluation), neither powerful nor weak (potency) and slightly dynamic (activity), whereas "managers" and other authorities are perceived as slightly negative (evaluation), very powerful (potency) and very dynamic (activity) (Ambrasat et al., 2014). This leads to the fact that many actions in the everyday repertoire of a manager are perceived as either too friendly and weak in contrast to the meaning of "manager" ("She cannot assert herself") or too unfriendly and dominant in the context of the meaning of "woman" ("She is bossy"). As a result, computer simulations of social interactions based on affect control theory show that women in leadership positions are exposed to higher affective dissonance than women in subordinate positions on the one hand and men in leadership positions on the other (Schröder et al., 2016). The importance of the cultural background is also made clear by the fact that the squared Euclidean differences in affective space between women and men in the USA are two and a half times smaller than in Germany (Schröder et al., 2013), which is also reflected in the fact that women are more frequently found in senior management positions there.

The example is intended to show how subtle cultural norms inescapably influence situational perceptions and action tendencies through the affective structuring of language. Collective ideas about the social order have an impact on people's decisions, which must be considered as a limiting condition of coaching processes.

Practical Relevance Using the Example of "Contextual Coaching"

Within the framework of a coaching session limited in time, it is neither possible nor useful to work out in-depth neuroscientific and social psychological theories. For this reason, many coaches work with simplified and visualized models of social interaction processes that help the client to construct more functional systems of meaning in terms of the desired developmental goals. One such model is "contextual coaching" (Craemer & Craemer, 2014; see Fig. 2), with which the second author is practically experienced and certified. In the following section, the practical relevance and a possible implementation of the described mechanisms of affectively coherent systems of meaning in coaching will be described. "Contextual Coaching" was scientifically influenced by the ABC model of Ellis' Rational-Emotive Behavior Therapy (1994). Its basic idea is that the evaluation (*beliefs*, B) of an activating event (*action*, A) has an impact on emotions or actions (*consequences*, C). According to this, feelings, and the resulting actions (C) are not generated from the outside in the sense of an objective reality, but by one's own interpretations. This idea is obviously compatible with the theory of semantic pointers described above—the network of
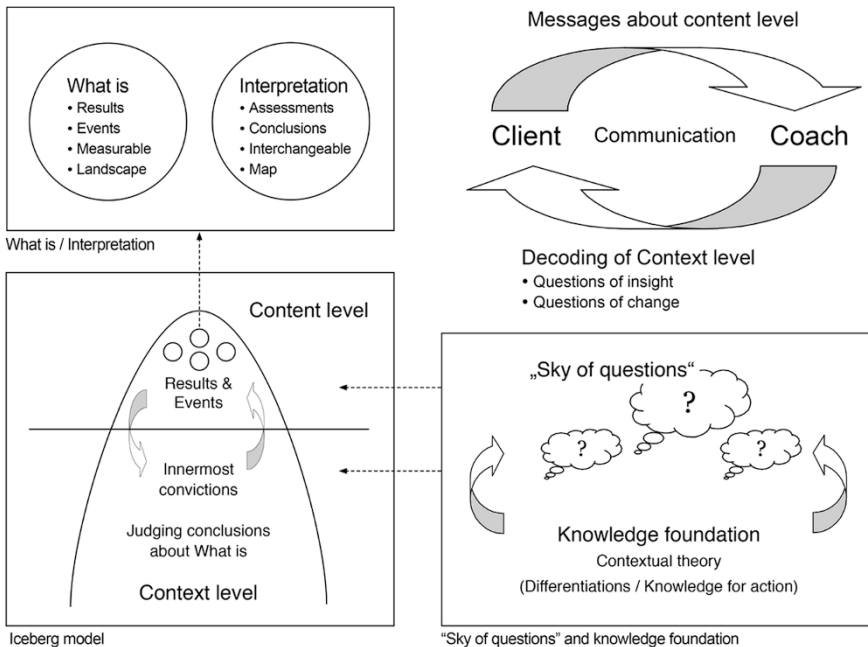
Fig. 2 Communication model of "contextual coaching" is an example of a coaching model established in practice. Representations after Craemer and Craemer (2014), Stephan and Maria Craemer

surface and deep meanings represented in the brain functions as the semantic frame for the evaluation of events.

The three basic assumptions of "contextual coaching" are (1) the perpetrator-victim-creator model, (2) results are a consequence of intention, and (3) feelings are a consequence of evaluations. The task of the coach is to empower the client to take the creator's point of view. This refers to the idea that the client's own behavior based on "contexts" also brings about results and events in life itself. This is the prerequisite for the client to put their hands on the "steering wheel of their life" instead of perceiving unsatisfactory life events as being caused by other people acting.

"Contextual coaching" is based on the assumption that sustainable change does not primarily occur on the conscious content level (iceberg model), but rather through the restructuring of one's innermost beliefs on the "contextual level", which directly influences the interpretation of results and events. "Context" is a concept of work that clarifies existing contents of one's consciousness such as opinions, conclusions, viewpoints, beliefs, perspectives etc. in an abstract way. The main difference to a specific belief is that in a mental-emotional "context", opinions and conclusions are so solidified that they are no longer consciously perceived as such and are therefore not questioned, but are present as a deeply felt "truth". A mental-emotional "context" seems as real as the air we breathe and acts like a belief trap whose deceptive character is often ignored out of convenience even when the quality of life and being are perceived as unsatisfactory.

In line with the assumption of affect control theory (see above) that affective meanings automate actions that confirm the original interpretation, "Contextual Coaching" assumes that people cause events themselves against the background of their "contexts". This is what is meant by the postulate that events and outcomes are a consequence of (conscious or unconscious) "intentions". If a client wants to experience other events, this requires directly the change of intentions and indirectly the change of "contexts".

Translated to terminology from the theory of semantic pointers, more functional patterns of interpretation of life events can only be achieved by a reconfiguration of structures of meaning that also includes the level of sub-symbolic, affective deep meanings. The automatic, perceived evaluation of facts as "true" is a consequence of an affectively coherent network of meaning (cf. Thagard, 2006), which must be dissolved in the coaching process.

The central task of the coach is to point out a space of possibility in the mental system of the client, which the client can use for change. Content and "contextual" levels (or surface and depth meanings according to the theory of semantic pointers) develop mutually confirming interactions that can be resistant to change. To achieve sustainable change, the client must take the creator's point of view, i.e. he or she must become aware of their responsibility for previous results. For this purpose, the old, dysfunctional "context" must be uncovered and reconfigured so that the client can create a new, functional "context" for achieving the desired results.

A coaching conversation depends on the situation and therefore varies in its practical implementation. Ideally, however, this can be described in "contextual

coaching" as a multi-stage process in which content, "context" and change issues are the central tools of the coach. Content questions help to understand the content level, "context questions" make the client's assessments visible, change questions focus on the realignment of cognitive and emotional patterns of thought and behaviour.

Phase 1: Discussion Framework and Clarification of Mandate

First, a safe framework for the coaching discussion must be established. For the client to be able to discuss all topics, the coach must give a sincere assurance of confidentiality. Here the coach creates a reality by means of linguistic declaration: Promises create trust, provided the promise is kept (integrity).

Next, the coach clarifies their assignment. The client explains what the problem is (question), for what purpose this problem is to be solved (intention) and what they want to be different in the future when the problem is solved (result). Results should be concretely visible and measurable. Only the results can be used to check whether the "context change" developed in the coaching conversation has become effective. The intention is the most important orientation for the coach because the client will only be ready for decisive changes if they have a sufficiently strong intention for something new.

The coach can already draw important conclusions from all three aspects of clarifying the assignment as to how the mental system of the client is configured. On the basis of their knowledge base, the coach will ask questions about specific situations and cognitive questions about the "contextual level" in the further course of the conversation.

Phase 2: Query Content Level

In the second phase, the coach must discover the most important intersubjectively ascertainable facts regarding the problem to be discussed and gain a complete understanding of their interrelationship. The coach must ask for information at the beginning, but also again and again during the conversation, because otherwise both the coach and the client would draw hasty and possibly incorrect conclusions due to insufficient knowledge of the system connections.

Phase 3: Uncovering "Contexts"

Together with the client, the coach explores the client's "mental map", i.e. together they uncover which evaluations and beliefs have contributed to the creation of the situation. To do this, the coach must abstract from the client's stories to draw

conclusions based on the "contexts". It is useful to distinguish between *what is* (observable facts) and *interpretation* (evaluative interpretations by the client).

Language as a medium of communication requires a sufficient agreement on the attribution of meaning to words. The coach must ask the client about their attributions of meaning until they have clarity about what the client means. In other words, an attempt is made to make the network of surface and depth meanings (Fig. 1) conscious. For example, if the client says: "My boss tricked me", the coach asks what the client thinks what the boss actually said or did. The coach must always be careful not to confound their own interpretations with those of the client.

Phase 4: Destroying Dysfunctional "Contexts" and Justification Histories

Clients often think, speak and act from the victim's point of view, i.e. they assign the origin and responsibility for the problem to other people (parents, partners, friends, strangers etc.), institutions (companies, administration, state etc.) or external circumstances (fate). The task of the coach is to encourage the client to take the creator's standpoint through questioning and reflection, whereby the client recognizes the mental convictions with which he or she helped create the situation. However, the client can only take the creator's standpoint if they have previously acknowledged their "perpetration". The client may conceal the information, which is expressed, e.g. by evasive answers that reveal their involvement in the creation of the problem. The coach must persuade the client to reveal this information by insistent emphatic questioning. If the client is not prepared to do so, the coach can ultimately only show them the consequences that arise from this action and resistance to change: the old thinking and behaviour will not produce new results.

The client will justify their previous behaviour because it has been of benefit to them so far. In this way, they consolidate their existing beliefs ("contexts"): the history of justification is the central bulwark in the client's unconscious defence strategy of maintaining old beliefs. The task of the coach is to inquire into the history of justification, to question it as a mental construction and then to deconstruct it in a Socratic dialogue.

Phase 5: "Context Change": From Victim to Perpetrator to Creator

The way to the creator's point of view is via the perpetrator's point of view. Victim and perpetrator standpoints are entangled with each other through guilt and behave towards each other like the two sides of a coin. Due to negatively evaluated experiences, the client *feels* like a victim and develops a claim to compensation,

which automatically makes them the perpetrator of others or of themselves. Only when the client recognizes and forgives their own perpetration, can they take the creator's point of view and make a profoundly new evaluation ("context change").

Phase 6: Recontextualization and Reorientation

Only from the creator's point of view can the client create a new context that is functional for their intentions and that enables the desired results and events to occur. The precondition for this is recontextualization, i.e. the reassessment of past experiences and thus the mental abandonment of the history of justification (Craemer & Craemer, 2014). Since "contexts" are always emotionally anchored, their emotional re-evaluation is also necessary. This is only possible in conversation to a limited extent and requires other, emotionally liberating exercises. Recontextualization is successful when an emotional relief and a conciliatory feeling towards the triggering event and the persons involved in it is established; consequently, a new, emotionally coherent network of semantic pointers has been created.

Conclusion

The aim of this chapter was to show the significance of current theorizing from cognitive science and social psychology of linguistic meaning construction for coaching practice. It should have become clear what challenges arise in coaching due to the complexity of meaning references on several levels from embodiment and emotion (deep meanings) to individual cognitions (surface meanings) to culturally shared sense structures. As explained using the practical example of "Contextual Coaching", effective coaching processes should be aimed at reconfiguring complex systems of meaning in such a way that the clients are able to experience and behave in a more functional way in accordance with their life goals.

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Leadership Coaching

Lisa Weihrauch, Sonja Kugler, Irmgard Mausz, and Dieter Frey

Case Study

As part of personnel restructuring in a software company, Peter took over the leadership role in a team where he had previously worked as an employee. To clarify the tasks and roles in his new position, Peter participates in a coaching session with coach Anna. Along with Peter, she reflects on why he is attending her coaching session. It turns out that Peter is worried that he will not be able to meet all expectations with respect to his new leadership position. After becoming aware of these unconscious concerns, Anna works with Peter on his leadership identity, his values, and how to set priorities. In addition, in their coaching sessions, they focus on the question: What is good leadership?

Introduction

What is leadership coaching and what are its special features? The initial example shows that leadership coaching requires a sensitivity regarding the expectations and role conflicts of the leader. In leadership coaching, open questions about leadership as well as individual views and feelings of the client are raised, reflected, and worked

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on. The aim is to develop the client's leadership competence by encouraging them to reflect on their own person and situation and by passing on knowledge.

Leadership coaching is a standard instrument of leadership development (Kampa-Kokesch & Anderson, 2001). It comprises the individual, intrapersonal development of leaders and the development of an effective, interpersonal leadership process (Day et al., 2014). In a longitudinal comparison of three studies from 1989, 1998, and 2004 (Böning, 2005), coaching for personal or professional problems is declining: While in 1989, 79% of the human resources leaders stated personal or professional problems as the reason for coaching, in 2004 it was only 24%. In contrast, coaching for leadership development has increased. In addition to leadership-specific issues (e.g., reflection on one's own leadership style, dealing with employees or team conflict), leadership coaching also addresses personal issues (e.g., work-life balance, career development, values) as well as organizational issues (e.g., dealing with change or problematic organizational structures; Böning, 2015). In leadership coaching, a coach provides assistance to leaders, primarily on work-related topics, and encourages reflection on strengths and areas of development (Ely et al., 2010; Feldman & Lankau, 2005).

The target group for leadership coaching is primarily upper and middle management. However, it is increasingly being used at various hierarchy levels (Rauen, 2014). The "top management" group is considered separately in the chapter on *top management coaching*.

Current State of Research on Leadership Coaching

Coaching is very widespread, but its effectiveness has only recently been examined in more detail (see Chapter *state of coaching research*). The literature criticizes the fact that a wide array of evaluation criteria was considered when testing the effectiveness of leadership coaching. Furthermore, the impact of the interaction between coaches and clients was neglected (Greif, 2016). A study by De Haan et al. (2013) showed that the success of leadership coaching depends on the positive perception of the relationship between the coach and the leader, the coaching tools used as well as the leaders' self-efficacy (see chapter on *coaching relationship*).

A detailed and current overview of leadership coaching studies can be found in Böning and Kegel (2015). However, there is still a great deal of research needed on leadership coaching.

Special Features of Leadership Coaching

Below, we outline special parameters and competencies needed by coaches in leadership coaching that differ from general coaching.

Leadership Context as a Framework Condition

A distinctive aspect of leadership coaching is the *context* of the leaders. The higher the position, the less *feedback* the person may receive. The withholding of feedback is also known as *CEO disease* (Goleman et al., 2001). In addition, studies have shown that self-assessment and external assessment often do not coincide. Often the external view of a person is different from their own (Haas et al., 2016; Fleenor et al., 2010). That is why feedback from other people is indispensable. Thus, various stakeholder groups can contribute various perspectives. For example, an employee has a different role than a supplier and therefore may hold different perspectives.

In leadership coaching, the leader receives feedback from their coach in a safe environment. The coach can also encourage the leader to obtain feedback from other people to fill in their own *blind spots*. The expression "blind spot" originates from the *Johari window* (see Fig. 1) by Luft and Ingham (1961). Four types of information, like attitudes and views, behavioral patterns, feelings, or skills, that are distinguished based on what is known/unknown to oneself and known/unknown to others. According to this model, there is information that is known to the person as well as to others: the *Public self*. The *Private self*, on the other hand, is known only to the person. There is also information that is unknown to the person and to others: the *Unconscious self*. Leaders can gain valuable insights by seeking feedback on information that is not known to themselves but is known to others (especially their employees): the *Unknown self*. This area is also known as the *blind spot.*

There can be several parties holding different interests towards leadership coaching. On the one hand, the leader themselves can act as a client with a personal concern. These *Clients* take part in leadership coaching mainly for individual

Fig. 1 The Johari window (Luft & Ingham, 1961, p. 34)

	Known to oneself	Unknown to oneself
Known to others	**Public self** „official identity"	**Unknown self** „blind spot"
Unknown to others	**Private self** „secret identity"	**Unconscious self** „hidden talents"

reasons, for example, improvement of basic behaviors or learning how to handle problematic daily business situations. On the other hand, the company can also act as a client with special requests regarding the coaching process. According to Ely et al. (2010), the interest of companies in leadership coaching lies particularly in improving the leadership skills of leaders in order to ensure leadership standards within the company. Being aware of such framework conditions raises coaches' awareness of those distinctive framework conditions of leadership coaching and facilitates their consideration in the coaching process.

Requirements for Coaches

For leadership coaching, coaches need comprehensive and flexible competencies that help them to cope with the diverse requirements of clients and companies (Ely et al., 2010). A survey with 428 coaches states four core competences for leadership coaches (Bono et al., 2009):

- Diagnostic and planning skills (e.g., to ask questions and to listen).
- Intervention and problem-solving skills (e.g., the ability to build a relationship with the client).
- Knowledge (e.g., about organizational structures and human behavior).
- Personal qualities (e.g., authenticity, honesty, and integrity).

As explained above, leaders may receive little or no feedback. For this reason, *critical reflection* is particularly important. Hereafter, self-reflection and team reflection are outlined in more detail.

Self-reflection (Frey, 2015; see also chapter on *self-reflection*) aims at making the leader aware of their own values and attitudes. In the initial example, hidden fears of Peter regarding role conflicts were revealed. Proceeding with the following questions: *Who am I as a leader? What do I stand for? What is working well and what is not? How can I improve?* These questions enable leaders to get a clearer picture of themselves, which then can facilitate decision-making. Also, these questions may help to detect issues or potential conflicts. Coaches are required to gain an overview with the client, create awareness of their own limits and develop a compass of values. This will subsequently make it easier for the leader to set priorities.

Team reflections (see West & Anderson, 1996) are regular reflections with the entire team. Similar questions can be asked here, such as: *Are we doing the right things as a team? Are we doing things right as a team? What is working well, what is not working well and how can we improve?* Even leadership practices can be addressed in the team reflection process. Different points of view and expectations must be identified and acknowledged according to the fact, that everyone is "blind" when it comes to their own shortcomings. It is important that the leader is aware of this and therefore can deal with conflicts caused by different expectations within the team.

In addition, it is important for the leader and their team to be aware of the extent to which they can or cannot influence a given situation. The leader is supported by the coach in making this differentiation. If the leader has an influence on the situation, they can change it if necessary. If the leader has no influence, they can either accept it (*love it*), *leave it*, or decide to take it on as a challenge (c*hallenge it*).

Leaders often face suboptimal conditions. In the interest of the entire organization, they must cut budgets or downsize jobs and, therefore, confront employees with loss experiences. In this respect, coaching can be used to discuss the right communication technique and timing. Psychological research (e.g., Müller-Seitz, 2014) has shown that individuals find it easier to deal with adverse conditions, if they have the opportunity to adjust beforehand. This is comparable to a process of vaccination, in which the patient is injected with an antibody that prepares the body for contact with the pathogen and consequently strengthens it. According to this *vaccination theory* (Frey et al., 2012a; McGuire, 1985), employees deal more easily with suboptimal conditions, if the possibility of adverse conditions has been discussed in advance with the leader.

Another important factor in dealing with suboptimal conditions is *perceived fairness*. Four different types of fairness can be distinguished (Colquitt, 2001). The *fairness of results is* about a fair distribution of resources. The difficulty is which criteria to use for decision-making. There are four different forms of result fairness:

1. *Principle of equality* (= everyone receives the same amount).
2. *Performance principle* (= allocation according to different levels of performance).
3. *Need principle* (= distribution based on different needs).
4. *Principle of entitlement* (= allocation according to informal rules such as the seniority principle).

People prefer to receive the maximum reward in comparison to their own efforts (Frey et al., 2004). If employees have different ideas about fairness, the leader must be able to deal with the disappointments of some employees.

Particularly in the case of failing to meet the fairness of results, other types of fairness become important: *Procedural fairness* refers to the way a decision is made. *Informational fairness* is about communicating the relevant information honestly, timely, and comprehensively. Finally, there is *interactional fairness,* which demands an equal and appreciative treatment of employees. Here it is particularly important to interact on an equal footing.

Psychological research has shown that the absence of result fairness increases the need for procedural fairness and informational fairness (Frey et al., 2005). In this context, it is important to be familiar with the *desires of the employees to be able to consider them.* If desires cannot be fulfilled, it is important to explain why in order to prevent demotivation and dissatisfaction of the employees.

In leadership coaching, the following questions are gaining importance: *What makes a good leader?* and *What skills do leaders need for their tasks today?* (Klein, 2011, p. 357). Therefore, for the coach, specific knowledge about leadership

(*professional competence*) is needed. This knowledge can be acquired through personal leadership experience (*field competence*). In addition, the coach requires a sensitivity for leadership problems (Diedrich & Kilburg, 2001). The fundamental question of what is meant by good leadership will be addressed in the following section.

What Is Good Leadership?

Leadership means achieving goals, solving problems, and giving people orientation as well as taking them along on the way to achieve goals or solve problems (Rosenstiel, 2009). The question of what constitutes good leadership is frequently discussed both in science and practice and is gaining practical significance in leadership coaching (Klein, 2011). Is good leadership about achieving the best possible result? Is it about achieving a high level of employee satisfaction? Or is successful leadership defined by the fact that customers are satisfied? The understanding of good leadership can vary depending on the interests of the target groups involved. An overview of what constitutes good leadership from various perspectives, helps the coach to recognize possible deficits and to classify problems more easily, in order to sensitize, stimulate and advance the client (see chapter on *leadership theories as knowledge base in coaching*).

According to our understanding at the Center for Leadership and People Management at LMU Munich, good leadership is characterized by establishing three basic cultures:

1. *Culture of Excellence.*
2. *Culture of Appreciation.*
3. *Ethical Leadership Culture.*

The *culture of excellence is about* creating framework conditions to achieve the highest quality, top performance, innovation, and sustainability. The expectations of both management and customers must be met. Frey and Schulz-Hardt (2000), for example, show how a culture of excellence can be created. In such cultures, individual teams or entire companies have committed themselves to achieving and maintaining the highest standards (Frey et al., 2005). This activates employees and encourages them to perform outstandingly in the interests of the company (Frey et al., 2012b). The leader plays a crucial role in this.

A culture of excellence includes the following facets:

- An open and hierarchy-free *communication culture* that promotes high-quality work and a high level of innovation on both the employee and the leadership level.
- A *problem-solving culture*, in which every leader and every employee contributes to solving problems that may arise.

- In a *constructive error culture,* errors are seen as an opportunity and used for active and constructive discussion on how to improve.
- In a constructive *culture of dispute and conflict*, conflicts are viewed positively, and controversial views are used for improvement.

These facets are the foundation of good leadership. If the above-mentioned aspects are missing, deficits are indicated and should be addressed.

The second basic culture of good leadership, the *culture of appreciation*, is about promoting human dignity (e.g., trust, fairness, and appreciation). Not only is a leader responsible for creating a culture of excellence, but also for treating employees fairly and fostering the talents of each individual and the team.

For the creation of an *ethical leadership culture*, the third basic culture of good leadership, *ethics-oriented leadership* (e.g., Frey et al., 2001) can be applied (cf. Fig. 2). The principle model of *ethically oriented leadership* combines 12 principles to establish an *ethical leadership culture, a culture of excellence as well as a culture of appreciation:*

Providing meaning and vision: Communicating the meaning and relevance of the employees' work and the overall vision of the company.
Objective and target agreement: Joint agreement of targets to avoid under- or overloading employees.

Fig. 2 Principle model of ethical leadership (see Frey, 2015, p. 24 ff)

12 Principles of Ethical Leadership

Principle of…

- providing meaning and vision
- objective and target agreement
- transparency through information and communication
- fairness
- constructive feedback
- autonomy and participation
- personal growth
- positive appreciation
- fit and suitability
- professional and social involvement
- role modelling
- situation-based leadership
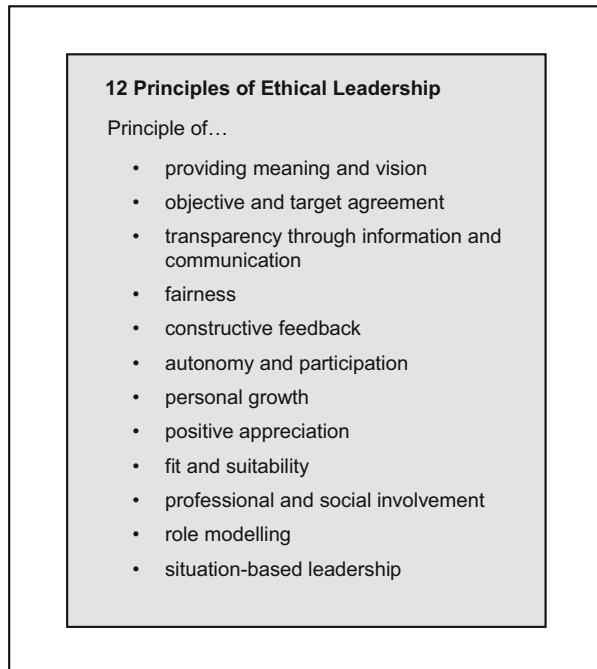
Transparency through information and communication: Employees receive information beyond their field of activity and can therefore behave in a future-oriented and responsible manner in line with the company's vision.

Fairness: Considering fairness of results, procedural fairness, information fairness, and interactional fairness (see above).

Constructive feedback: Communicating criticism in a clear, constructive, and appreciative manner. The guiding principle here is: "*Tough on the issue, soft on the person.*"

Autonomy and participation: Employees are given the opportunity to be actively involved in work processes.

Personal growth: Opportunities for employees for further development according to their skills and interests.

Positive appreciation: Showing high personal appreciation for employees, for example treating them as important internal customers and suppliers of services.

Fit and suitability: The requirements of the job should be in line with the personal skills and strengths of the employees.

Professional and social involvement: Promotion of group activities and mutual support within the team.

Role modeling: The leader should be aware of their function as a role model, act sincerely toward the employees and maintain congruence between words and deeds.

Situation-based leadership: Leaders should not only show one leadership style but also adapt their leadership according to the situation and the employees.

After all, an ethical leadership culture is all about four aspects: *leading by example and showing responsibility, commitment,* and *trust.* To maintain a balance between a culture of excellence and a culture of appreciation, a leader must take all of those four aspects into account. Particularly important is the last one; trust plays an important role, as trust in leaders as well as trust in the team have a positive effect on team performance (Braun et al., 2013).

Conclusion

In summary, leadership coaching is a well-established instrument of leadership development and is continuing to gain in importance. More scientifically based research on leadership coaching is needed to obtain a better understanding of the functioning of this instrument. Despite many overlaps with general coaching, leadership coaching has special features in its framework conditions and requirements for the coach. According to the LMU Center for Leadership and People Management, good leadership is characterized by the establishment of three cultures—*a culture of excellence, a culture of appreciation* and an *ethical leadership culture.* Leadership must ensure that all hierarchy levels are leading by example, responsibility, commitment, and trust, thereby achieving a balance between a culture of

excellence and a culture of appreciation. This approach provides a foundation in leadership coaching for stimulating changes in leadership behavior and achieving a favorable target state.

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Leadership Theories as Knowledge Base in Coaching

Jörg Felfe and Gwen Elprana

Case Study

Sandra has been appointed as the new team leader, having joined the organization 6 months ago. In order to get support for the numerous questions and problems associated with the new challenge, she turned to Petra as a coach. For example, Sandra would like support in the question of whether she should make *clear announcements* to consolidate her new leadership position or whether she runs the risk of losing the support of the team. All in all, she is worried about not being recognized as a former team member in her new supervisor role. What should she look out for? She is also unsure how and how often she should conduct team meetings or employee discussions. Her predecessor did this only sporadically. In addition, she was requested to increase team performance, but without getting any additional resources. Petra is now faced with the task of structuring Sandra's various concerns and working with her on them together. To do so, she needs leadership-specific concepts, models, and corresponding scientific insights.

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Scientific Theories or Practical Experience?

What is important to be successful as a leadership coach? Usually, two areas of competence are distinguished: On the one hand, there are the coach competencies that are important in all coaching sessions. This includes for example powerful questions, active listening, and reflection. On the other hand, field experience is useful (Passmore, 2007). This refers to the knowledge and expertise relating to the field of activity of the client seeking support. As a coach in sales, it is definitely advantageous to know about the sales function in an organization, sales techniques, and psychological barriers in sales. The same applies to coaching in the health sector, social work, or education. Knowledge and experience in the respective field help the coach to understand the system faster, be more focused in their questions, ask the right questions recognize the common conflicts which occur, and use the language and jargon of the sector or role which demonstrates credibility and understanding to the client. Moreover, profound knowledge prevents one from being guided by naive ideas or the beginner's mind. However, the field competence should not be too much in the foreground. The coach may risk premature assumptions and *blind spots* which act as a barrier to effective outcomes. Too much field competence can tempt one to rashly lean towards the own supposed expertise and neglect the client's own problem-solving. Theory can provide a conceptual framework to better understand the challenge of the practice. The following chapter gives an overview of the central theories that the coach can use as a guide.

Tasks, Functions, and Models of Leadership

Tasks, Functions, and Roles of Managers and Leaders

Knowledge of tasks, functions, and roles is particularly important for the coach if the coach wants to support the client, for example, in clarifying roles, developing competencies, or time management. Here it is important to have the entire spectrum in view.

The task and goal of leadership are to direct employee behavior toward the fulfillment of the organization's goals. By challenging and promoting the performance of employees, leaders ensure the success of the organization (Felfe, 2009). Numerous subtasks and functions result from this task (Felfe & Franke, 2014; Malik, 2006). In addition to general management functions (formulating goals, organizing, deciding, controlling, etc.), these include tasks that directly influence employees. Typical tasks and functions of direct leadership are, for example, instructing, delegating, motivating, training and education. To distinguish between these two functional areas, the terms management and leadership have become established.

To perform, employees first need the necessary knowledge and skills. As a further prerequisite, the employees must be willing to get involved. This means motivation.

As a third prerequisite for independent, self-reliant action, employees must have the necessary degrees of freedom and decision latitude. It is therefore the essential task of leaders to create these conditions in order to promote and develop employee performance: (1) With the help of training and systematic feedback, leaders can increase their employees' effectiveness. (2) Motivation is achieved by agreeing challenging goals, setting incentives, removing obstacles, and monitoring performance with appropriate feedback. (3) If the employees have the necessary competencies, know their goals, and are motivated to get involved, delegation can provide the necessary decision- latitude.

Since teams with a strong sense of unity and good cooperation are more efficient, team development is another important task or function of leadership. In addition, the activities of the individual employees must be coordinated by organizing the division of labor, processes, and interfaces. This also applies to the interfaces to other organizational areas. Ensuring that the necessary technical, material, and personnel resources are available is also one of the organizational tasks.

In addition, the everyday working life of leaders and managers can be stressful (e.g., time pressure, interruptions, uncertainty, conflicts, etc.). It is also one of their tasks to cope with these burdens. This means that six important tasks and functions of leadership have already been named.

Since the main focus of leadership tasks is on social interactions, the different functions can also be understood as social roles to be filled. In coaching, it can be an important concern to clarify which roles are currently in the foreground, which are being neglected, and which should be developed. Conflicts between different role expectations also frequently arise. For example, the following roles could be distinguished: Representative, coordinator, visionary, innovator, entrepreneur, team player, pioneer, role model, mentor, etc. The concept of role makes it clear that the tasks and functions do not exist objectively and are therefore unchangeable, but are the result of a social negotiation process.

Against the background of new developments, leaders are also faced with new tasks and challenges that have to be mastered. Knowledge of these current topics is also important for the coach. These include demographic change (lack of specialists and managers, management of mixed-age teams), the increase in mental health risks (increase in intensity and competitive pressure, permanent availability, individualization, and deregulation), permanent change processes (innovation, change management, digitalization) and, last but not least, increasing globalization (diversity management) (Felfe & Franke, 2014).

Management Instruments and Tools

Managers can use various management instruments to fulfill their tasks in everyday operational management. As a rule, these are standardized employee appraisals. Their systematic and regular application is also one of the tasks of managers. These include (Malik, 2006; Felfe, 2009):

- Goal setting
- Control systems or feedback discussions
- Assessment system or assessment interview
- Personnel development programs
- Instruction, training, and education
- Team meetings, moderation, presentation
- Job descriptions and requirement profiles
- Planning and control, budgeting
- Instructions and regulations
- Time management techniques

A coach should be familiar with these instruments, their background, and the associated opportunities and risks in order to identify appropriate approaches for the client. The question must be asked which instruments are used systematically and to what extent their use is effective.

Communication

The basis for effective influence is successful communication. Convincing, delegating, instructing, criticizing, but also expressing appreciation are central means of goal-oriented communication. Besides openness, interest, empathy, and appreciation, the basics of both partner- and goal-oriented communication include active listening, feedback, questioning techniques, meta-communication, and awareness of the opportunities and risks of one's own communication style, including the mostly unconscious non-verbal parts. Knowledge of the possible causes of communication problems and conflicts is an important prerequisite for avoiding or eliminating them (Felfe, 2009).

In the attempt to exert influence over superiors and other members of the organization, it is also a matter of expanding one's own scope of action. Blickle (2004) distinguishes a total of 13 influence strategies (micropolitics). These include exchange offers (offering a favor), rationality (presenting detailed elaborations), involving higher authorities, consultations (asking the addressee of influence for suggestions), personal appeals (reminding of friendship and loyalty), and self-promotion (presenting oneself as successful). Young managers in particular find it difficult to understand the importance of micro-political action and to use it for themselves to assert themselves and/or oppose the influence of others. In order to be helpful as a coach, it is therefore important to know the mechanisms and rules of power. This means dealing with power and influence in a responsible manner and knowing the negative consequences of ruthless, hostile use of power (Scholl, 2014).

A coach should also be aware of the fact that leaders are usually employees themselves and thus integrated into organizational structures. Their influence and scope for leadership may well be limited (Korek et al., 2015). For example, the leadership substitutes approach (Kerr & Jermier, 1978) emphasizes the importance

of structures and organizational frameworks (structural leadership) for the limited scope of influence of leaders. Nor should the influence of employees be underestimated (management from below). For example, if managers are more likely to meet the implicit expectations of their employees, they can count on more support and loyalty (Lord et al., 1984).

The fact that employees manage and organize themselves, especially with increasingly flat hierarchies and increased team and project work, is referred to as self-management or *shared leadership* (Pearce & Sims, 2002). It has been suggested that essential management tasks, such as in semi-autonomous working groups, can be performed by the members of the group themselves. The possibility and empowerment of the employees themselves to exert more influence are particularly emphasized in the approach of psychological empowerment (Spreitzer, 1995). Leadership has a decisive influence on this (Schermuly, 2015). This makes it clear that leadership is not only bound to a formal leadership position but can also be exercised by group members.

Leadership Styles and Behavior

In leadership research, there are numerous concepts that provide guidance on how the various leadership tasks should be performed and what needs to be considered when dealing with employees (Yukl, 2010). For example, should leaders make decisions alone (authoritarian) or should they involve employees (participatory)? Accordingly, it is helpful for the leadership coach to be familiar with these concepts. Some of the main concepts and leadership theories are listed below.

Styles and Behavior

The distinction between different leadership styles was essentially inspired by the research of the German Gestalt psychologist Kurt Lewin, who emigrated in the 1930s. He made a distinction between the three leadership styles: democratic, authoritarian, and laissez-faire (Lewin et al., 1939). Further developments in research have shown that leadership behavior can be divided into two major areas or behavioral orientations *initiating structure* (task orientation) and *consideration* (employee orientation) (Hemphill & Coons, 1957):

- *Employee orientation*: This management behavior is characterized by an appreciation of the employee, consideration of individual needs, and involvement or participation.
- *Task orientation*: This behavioral orientation focuses on clarifying objectives and monitoring the achievement of objectives.

Current research shows that both styles exist in parallel and are jointly responsible for performance and satisfaction (Judge et al., 2004). Blake and Mouton (1964) developed their *grid approach* against the background of the two dimensions. The individual leadership style is composed of a combination of task and employee orientation and can be displayed in a 9-level coordinate system (grid = behavioral grid) based on the respective characteristics. This provides the opportunity for systematic development through training and coaching.

In coaching practice, this means that managers should be aware of their strengths and weaknesses in both areas of behavior and should compensate for any deficits that are identified. Managers with a strong task orientation should examine how they can involve their employees more. Conversely, managers with a one-sided employee orientation should work on how to ensure clear and binding goals.

In order to enable leaders and coaches to assess leadership behavior appropriately and realistically, instruments for *leadership style analysis* are available, in which employees assess their leader's behavior (e.g., upward assessment, 360-degree feedback; cf. Felfe, 2009; Scherm & Sarges, 2002). In coaching, additional clarity about one's own behavior and its effect can be gained by comparing self- and external assessments.

Situational Approaches

If one assumes that both employee and task orientation have their justification, the question arises as to when and in which situations which leadership behavior is the most appropriate. There are some indications from research that are useful for coaching in order to find the optimal behavior for a certain situation. In the widespread concept of *situational leadership,* Hersey and Blanchard (1996) postulate that the degree of maturity of the team members determines which leadership behavior is effective. In terms of maturity, a distinction must be made between motivation and competence. By combining the two dimensions, four types of employees can be distinguished, for whom a different leadership style is recommended. For example, for employees who are neither competent nor motivated, a more task-oriented and less employee-oriented style is required (telling, directing). However, the same behavior would be unproductive and demotivating for competent and motivated employees. These team members should be given as much decision-making authority and responsibility as possible to enable them to work independently (delegating). The approach postulates that the degree of maturity can develop over time and that it is a central leadership task to promote the maturity of employees (Life Cycle Theory of Leadership).

Vroom and Yetton (1973) have investigated in which situations managers should rather decide alone (directive) and when it is better to involve employees in the decision-making process (participatory). Again, the question can only be answered depending on the situation. It is important, for example, whether sufficient time is available and whether the quality of the decision can be improved by involving the

employees. This is particularly the case if the leader does not have all the information. If the successful implementation of a decision also depends on its acceptance by the employees, it is also important to involve the employees in advance. In order to be able to select the right level of participation in a concrete situation, Vroom and Yetton (1973) developed a decision tree with a question algorithm. Simplified, it is mainly about questions of the availability of alternative actions, relevant information on the part of the employees as well as time and importance of the acceptance of the employees. If the questions can be answered in the affirmative, it is advisable to involve the employees; if they are more likely to be negative, the leader should decide on their own. In coaching, individual decision preferences and their appropriateness can be diagnosed, for example with the LJI—Leadership Judgement Indicator (Neubauer et al., 2012), based on which appropriate alternatives can be developed.

Social Cognition and Motivation

Which social judgment processes influence the interaction between leader and employee and how can employees be motivated? The *attribution theory of leadership* assumes that the behavior of a leader is to be understood primarily as a reaction to the behavior of employees and the respective attribution of causes (Mitchell, 1995). For example, the cause of success or failure can be seen in outstanding competencies or insufficient skills or in favorable or unfavorable circumstances (e.g., luck or chance). Depending on how it is attributed (e.g.: Is the employee to blame or the circumstances?), leaders will react differently (recognition, support, sanctions). However, it is known that people tend to make systematic errors. Thus, the cause of behavior in others is sought in the person rather than in the situation (fundamental attribution error). If employees are made hastily responsible for a failure, conflicts can quickly arise and motivation is jeopardized. In coaching, managers can reflect on their attitudes and attributes as well as their significance for their own behavior. In particular, it is important to avoid rash judgments and not to jeopardize motivation.

The *path-goal theory* of House (1971) and Evans (1970) emphasizes the cognitive aspects of the motivation process. Management success, therefore, depends mainly on how well the leader motivates the employees. The basis of the path-goal theory is the *expectation x value* approach (Atkinson, 1958) and the subsequent developments of Vroom (1964). A strong motivation develops only if a goal is attractive for employees (value) and also achievable (expectation). In addition, the level of ambition of a goal has an effect on motivation. *Goal-setting theory* postulates that specific and challenging goals increase motivation and thus effort (Wegge, 2015). Against this background, it is the task of managers to (1) convey the meaning of the goal and (2) the way in which this goal can be achieved, (3) ensure a challenging level of ambition, and (4) provide regular and concrete feedback. These theories form the basis for current management systems and leadership

instruments such as goal setting, management by objectives (MbO), or balanced scorecards (BSC). The effective use of these systems can be a central starting point in coaching.

Transformational Leadership

For some years now, theories have been gaining in importance in science as well as in practice that aim to lead employees and organizations in such a way that outstanding performance can be achieved and that new challenges can be successfully met. It is important to convey attractive visions, communicate convincingly, be perceived as a role model, and support the development of employees. While previous approaches emphasize specific behaviors, techniques or management systems, these approaches focus on the leader's personality.

Particularly noteworthy is the concept of transformational leadership (Bass, 1985; Felfe, 2006a, 2006b). Transformational leaders motivate their employees by (1) convincingly conveying attractive visions that are worth engaging with (inspirational motivation), (2) being perceived as trustworthy themselves and convincing through their role model effect (idealized influence), (3) supporting the individual development of employees (individualized consideration), and last but not least (4) stimulating independent thinking and supporting change (intellectual stimulation). Transformational leadership addresses (*transforms*) above all the values and motives of those being led: short-term, material goals (extrinsic motivation) are replaced by long-term, higher-level values and ideals (intrinsic motivation). Numerous international scientific studies and meta-analyses prove the positive influence of transformational leadership on various measures of success (Judge & Piccolo, 2004; Wang et al., 2011) such as commitment, engagement, empowerment et cetera, but also willingness to change and innovation (Herrmann et al., 2012). More recent theories of ethical leadership (Brown et al., 2005) or authentic leadership (Walumbwa et al., 2008) point in a similar direction.

These theories help in coaching to focus attention on the effect of the personality of the leader: How is trust gained, how can enthusiasm be ignited, how well does the leader know their employees, why would the employees get engaged and how well do they succeed in being perceived as a role model? It is also important to reflect on one's own motivation as a leader (Felfe et al., 2017) and compare it with the expectations of the organization. This reflection should be open-ended and can thus also lead to a professional change.

Conclusion

As an orientation for the diagnosis and development of successful leadership in coaching, the following guidelines can be derived from the different concepts and theories (Felfe & Franke, 2014). The following seven points integrate different theories and models:

- Loyalty and trust through credibility, role model function, and appreciation.
- Motivation, commitment, and enthusiasm through sense-making and with attractive goals.
- Staff and team development through delegation, participation, and coaching.
- Performance promotion through goal setting, feedback, and fair rewards.
- Orientation through open communication, control, and clear decisions.
- Efficiency through the systematic use of management tools.
- Sustainability through health promotion, work-life balance, innovation, and personal reflection.

With the help of these points, central strengths and areas of development can be identified, which are then worked on in coaching.

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Learning as the Basis for Coaching

Annette Kluge and Vera Hagemann

Coaching and Learning

Coaching is seen as an instrument for managing change in order to improve the employees' ability to solve problems and learn, to balance the tension between personal needs, the tasks to be performed and the overriding corporate goals (Backhausen & Thommen, 2006, p. 22). Coaching should contribute to the achievement of self-congruent goals and thus implies learning processes on the part of the client.

According to Bower and Hilgard (1984), the result of learning processes are changes in the behavior or behavioral potential of an organism with regard to a specific situation, which can be traced back to repeated experiences of the organism in this situation (and cannot be attributed to innate behavioral tendencies or temporary states, such as fatigue or drunkenness (Volume I, p. 31; Griffin & Kluge, 2004; Schorr, 1993)).

Accordingly, coaching and learning include processes for relatively long-lasting changes in behavior that cannot be attributed to age-related changes (Bredenkamp, 1998, p. 22 ff.).

Of course, behavioral changes can be initiated and maintained on the basis of learning processes through "trial and error", by observing successful role models or by attending seminars and training courses. Coaching has the potential to accompany a person intensively with regard to this individual learning process, in contrast to

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group-based forms of learning such as seminars or training courses with 10–12 participants, where learning goals for a whole target *group of* people have been identified on the basis of organizational or activity-based needs analyses. Coaching accelerates learning in comparison to the time consuming "trial and error" and contributes to the achievement of "self-congruence", above all through an intensive, very personal phase of client-oriented goal definition in the coaching process.

Case Study

A department head from the chemical industry approaches a female coach with his request: Felix, one of their team leaders (mid-30s, PhD chemist), has leadership potential and should be systematically built up in a junior management program, but would be perceived by all other team leader colleagues as very arrogant and unapproachable, so that the cooperation among the team leaders (a total of 5 male colleagues) in cross-team projects is made difficult. Each team leader is a proven expert in their field and very valuable to the company. The cooperation between the team leader colleagues will become even more important in the future, since an organizational change will take place and in the change phase, when not all processes will have been defined yet, cooperation will have to be even more intensive than it already is today. The head of department asks for individual coaching for the team leader Felix, as he perceives "reservations" from the team leader colleagues and cannot rationally explain them for himself. The short-term coaching goal agreed upon between the female coach and the head of department is to sensitize Felix for his effect on the team leader colleagues and in the long term to improve the cross-team cooperation in the entire team leader group.

In this case, the task of the coach would be to present techniques of self-reflection with regard to the "arrogant behavior" perceived by others, to learn to adopt the perspective of team leader colleagues and to develop self-congruent goals with regard to the perceived reservations and interpersonal tensions with team leader colleagues, and a conscious self-change on the basis of learning processes.

Felix' learning processes take place on the cognitive ("I *understand the* behavioral patterns by virtue of which others experience me as arrogant"), emotional ("I *feel* myself in the perspective of team leader colleagues"), and interpersonal behavioral levels ("I can behave in such a way that I am perceived as ready to cooperate") (Böning & Kegel, 2015; Mäther et al., 2015).

Self-Regulated Learning as a Basis for Coaching

The "initial spark" of learning processes in coaching are self-regulation processes of an employee or a manager. Central assumptions of self-regulation theories (Anderson et al., 2001; Bandura, 1986; Hellervik et al., 1992; Kanfer & Schefft,

1988) are that people observe their own behavior and evaluate it in comparison to an internalized standard (e.g., the management guidelines in the company). If a person perceives a discrepancy between their own behavior (actual) and standards (target), affective reactions are triggered (e.g., dissatisfaction) and adjustments are made to their own perception of self-efficacy (Hellervik et al., 1992).

If, as in our example, Felix does not perceive them, it is the task of the coach to explore this discrepancy and the affective reactions to it (the unpleasant feeling of "reservations" in cooperation) by asking questions. The meta-analysis by Theebom et al. (2014) shows that coaching has strong effects ($g = 0.74$) in terms of goal-oriented self-regulation.

Solutions are found through thinking, exchange with the coach, and transfer of solutions from other areas, e.g., exploratory learning (exploring the environment, experiencing something, and learning in the process (Lorenz, 1973; Griffin & Kluge, 2004). Problem-solving processes are associated with processing of information which leads to a goal-oriented re-linking of the information (Hussy, 1998), e.g., in which others describe which behavior is perceived as arrogant and which reservations arise from it. Goal-oriented restructuring of one's own self-image through an examination of the image of others through thought and problem-solving processes has an effect on Felix' experience and behavior. This makes the newly learned insights particularly effective in terms of experience and behavior (Griffin & Kluge, 2004).

Self-regulation is based on a so-called negative feedback loop (see also Control Theory according to Carver and Scheier (1982), see *Goals in Coaching, Grant* in this manual). If a discrepancy between the actual and target state is experienced, a person will try to approach the target state through adaptive behavior (Hellervik et al., 1992).

In order for these self-regulatory processes to be initiated and maintained in a goal-oriented manner, both a specific goal and a feedback are required. Neither the goal alone nor the feedback is effective prerequisites.

If the coach only talks about the goals ("appearing less arrogant"), but not about concrete behavior and the degree of deviation in Felix' behavior as well as measures for self-development and their success, then self-regulation cannot be initiated. For the coaching process, this means that both the development of concrete goals (e.g., in terms of SMART goals; see chapter "Coaching Definitions and Concepts" and "Goals in Coaching", *Grant* in this handbook) and goal-oriented feedback are important mechanisms that promote learning.

Triggering and Maintaining Factors of Self-Regulation Through Coaching

Triggers and mechanisms for the maintenance of such learning are motivational processes. If, for example, a discrepancy between the actual and target state is

experienced as too large and thus insurmountable, a problem-solving learning process is not initiated or aborted.

Other important supporting processes for self-regulation are intention formation (Kuhl, 1985), the motivational processes for maintaining the intention, and the active defense of the intention against other stronger intentions that do not contribute to the achievement of the goal. Felix, for example, takes it upon himself to talk briefly about his own projects with the individual team leader colleagues every day and also to address problems in order to appear more "approachable" and open up. Felix does not want to be experienced only as a "high-flyer and doer." In day-to-day business, however, communication with colleagues, in particular, can often "fall by the wayside." However, this intention to talk to colleagues is the prerequisite for behavior and must be "protected" so that it does not "fall victim" to other stronger intentions (which usually mean less effort). The following processes have a protective effect (Kuhl, 1985; Hellervik et al., 1992):

1. *Attentional selectivity* is the process that protects one intention from other intentions by actively seeking information in the environment that supports the current intention, e.g., by preparing intensively for team leader meetings with the support of the coach and consciously focusing one's attention on the situation of colleagues and not on distracting events such as production problems and their solutions.

2. *Emotional control* supports the maintenance of emotions that further sustain the intention and the suppression of emotions that undermine the intention, e.g., by imagining the positive feeling of personal satisfaction that you will experience when you have arranged a satisfying team leader meeting. This can also be promoted in coaching through self-observation of one's own emotions to date and exercises in imagining the feelings after a successful handling of the situation.

3. *Motivation control* helps to turn a weak intention into a strong intention (compared to the attention-related selectivity that maintains strength), e.g., by making people aware in coaching of the negative consequences of not talking about difficulties with team leader colleagues in the meeting and thus opening up.

4. *Environment-related control* involves changing one's own environment to protect an existing intention, e.g., getting feedback even within the family circle when one might be perceived as arrogant and asking to be warned early on.

5. Finally, *economical information processing* should help to avoid spending too much time on all conceivable forms of translating intention into action, but to simply start at a certain time. The longer the possibilities for action are considered, the greater the risk that information is also processed, which casts doubt on the desire of the intention. For this purpose, the techniques and exercises of thought stopping and focusing on the planned actions can be useful.

Supporting Learning Processes Through Coaching

These cognitive and emotional skills necessary for self-regulation can be learned with the support of a coach.

Frayne and Latham (1987) showed, for example, that the identification of problematic behavior, personal objectives, self-observation, self-reinforcement and self-punishment, and the maintenance of self-management skills can be learned in eight weekly sessions of 30 min each and led to a significant increase and maintenance of one's self-efficacy. Further examples of learning self-regulation techniques can be found with Leach et al. (2005) for the sales area, with Yeow and Martin (2013) in the management area and with Baumeister et al. (2006) in a number of other areas of life.

The learning processes to be supported are based on Hellervik et al. (1992):

(a) Learning to evaluate one's own behavior on a performance dimension and to analyze the causes that lead to the behavior being maintained (personal needs analysis).
(b) Learning to set change objectives based on the needs analysis.
    Learning to observe one's own behavior in the professional context and to use self-reinforcement and punishment mechanisms, depending on whether one has achieved the goals one has set oneself.
(c) Learn to identify situations where a relapse into undesirable behavior is possible.
(d) Learn to apply coping strategies to deal with such relapse-triggering situations.

The task in coaching would then be:

(a) To support a person in building an expectation that a formulated wish can be successfully transformed into an action (Heckhausen & Kuhl, 1985).
(b) The desire to undergo a relevance check, the so-called OTIUM check, which the intention must "pass."

OTIUM stands for Opportunity, Time, Importance, Urgency, and Means.
To form an intention, a person must perceive that:

She has the *opportunity to* turn the wish into an action. The coach can help to find ways to create opportunities and resources.
She has the *time* to perform the actions. The coach can "find" time for this with the client using time management techniques.
The goal is *important* to them. The coach can support the client in discovering the connection between the perceived arrogance and the lack of cooperation and the importance of the cooperation for further professional goals in Felix' company.
The achievement of the goal is *urgent*, in that the coach(s) clarify the context of the planned IPO and the then necessary cooperation requirements and include them in the action planning.
The *means* serve to achieve the goal by the coach(s) choosing such feedback that is directly related to the desired behavior and promotes a trusting exchange with team leader colleagues.

Heckhausen and Kuhl (1985) assume that the intention of persons must withstand two OTIUM checks. Before the intention formation (OTIUM-future), the person must formulate the expectation that in an unspecified future an intention (e.g., to seek regular conversation with colleagues) can be translated into an action. This leads to an intention formation (Felix thinks: "I would like to continue working for the specialty chemicals company in the future and intensify the cooperation with colleagues during the change phase"). However, in order to actually act, the intention must pass an OTIUM-now test, namely the questions of whether the opportunity (can I already improve the conditions for willingness to cooperate by my own behavior?), the time (can I, with my current workload, spare more time for preparing the discussions with colleagues?), the urgency (do I have time pressure to improve cross-team cooperation?), the importance (how important is the impact on others and cooperation with team leader colleagues?), and the means (do I have the resources to attend meetings and are meetings currently taking place at all?).

If one takes up an action even though the intention has not fulfilled all OTIUM criteria, a so-called "defective intention" can occur ("actually I want to talk to the colleagues, but . . ."). As a result, the action may be aborted even if the goal is not achieved. There may also be changes in the organization which result in the OTIUM criteria no longer being met (e.g., if meetings are cancelled due to more urgent problems in production).

As shown above, coaching can be used to trigger and facilitate the implementation of the OTIUM-future and OTIUM-now checks by asking questions to support the maintenance of the intention. The person being coached practices by supporting the coach in carrying out the relevance checks and in focusing attention. The OTIUM checks can already be effective in clarifying the mandate and defining the objectives of the coaching (Looss & Rauen, 2005; Rauen, 2005).

Coaching as Support for Removing Barriers in Self-Regulation-Based Learning Processes

Learning processes based on self-regulation and the assumptions of control theory have a conclusive effect. Nevertheless, in the professional context we experience that this learning process is not without obstacles. Particularly in the organizational context, it can be experienced that the desired performance standards ("appear less arrogant") are rather vaguely formulated and clear behavior-related criteria are missing. Here it can be the task of coaching to develop these behavior-related criteria together with the client ("What does less arrogant mean? What seems arrogant to the others anyway?") and to define them in such a way that they withstand the OTIUM check. Self-regulation is also made more difficult if the client is not able to show the desired behavior, e.g., because the behavior makes high demands on the coordination and temporal integration of different (partial) skills (Kluge, 2014). In addition, self-regulation requires precise feedback. An expression like "you don't get through

to your colleagues" is not specific enough. In coaching, therefore, role-play simulations or video feedback methods should be used in such cases to work on specific behavioral patterns. Self-regulation in relation to a target criterion is also "suspended" if attention is no longer focused on oneself, since, for example, triggered by the company's IPO, attention is shifted to other aspects in the professional context. In coaching, mis-regulation can also be counteracted by instructing the client to pay attention to the "goal-related" feedback or, after perceiving the discrepancy between actual and target behavior, to set the "effective" target behavior as the goal. An example is a manager who perceives that she is not taken as seriously as she would like by her employees and switches to authoritarian behavior in the belief that this will gain her more respect.

Personal Learning Variables in Self-Regulation in Coaching Processes

Due to individual differences, motivation to change and initiate self-regulatory processes is not equally pronounced among all employees and managers. With reference to Control Theory (Carver & Scheier, 1982), which stresses the importance of specific goals and feedback in order to initiate and maintain self-regulatory processes, both the goal and the feedback orientation of the clients are relevant for successful learning in coaching. Feedback orientation refers to the tendency of a person to seek, accept, and process feedback (Linderbaum & Levy, 2010), which correlates positively with the quality of the relationship between coach and client (Gregory, 2010, in: Gregory et al., 2011).

An important learning support function of the coach is also to help identify a discrepancy between an actual state and a desired target state and to evaluate it as significant, so that the client is motivated to change according to the goals of the organization or the comments of superiors, for example. This motivation to change or learn is positively supported by personal variables, such as the client's career orientation, job involvement, and organizational commitment (Colquitt et al., 2000). Other client-related factors influencing successful behavior change are pre-training motivation as well as cognitive skills and personality variables such as learning orientation and acceptance of social norms (Colquitt & Simmering, 1998; Hellervik et al., 1992). Openness to experience and extraversion also favor learning processes (Barrick & Mount, 1991).

Individual differences in the clients' orientation to actions or situations also promote or inhibit the implementation of intentions (Kuhl, 1985). Action-oriented individuals successfully focus on the development of action plans and on overcoming challenges in implementing intentions with the help of action control strategies. In coaching, situation-oriented persons would possibly focus more strongly on past, present, or future events and are more likely to get caught up in (negative) emotions and thoughts, so that the implementation and execution of intentions could be

inhibited (Kuhl, 1985). With the help of action control strategies, action-oriented clients are therefore more likely to achieve the volitional phase and the initiation of action, i.e., to seek out learning situations and initiate self-regulatory processes, over and above the intention.

The self-efficacy of individuals has also proven to be a positive factor influencing learning success (Tannenbaum & Yukl, 1992). Promoting factors of self-efficacy include an internal locus of control, low anxiety, and positive manifestations of conscientiousness and performance orientation (Colquitt et al., 2000; Judge et al., 2007).

In this respect, the coach can, on the one hand, use diagnostic procedures to record these client-related learning prerequisites and, on the other hand, adjust their coaching interventions to the client's own prerequisites. Thus, the coach(s) can stimulate self-reflection on situation orientation by means of questioning techniques or compensate for a less pronounced action orientation by means of special thinking techniques.

Since coaching is a process of continuous feedback, but also requires the active seeking of feedback, it would be important, for example, to record the feedback orientation of the client supporting the learning process and to develop coaching strategies to be able to change this positively. Specifically, feedback orientation is the subjectively perceived benefit of feedback in terms of actually being able to achieve goals, the perceived obligation to take the feedback received into account, the tendency to use feedback to find out how others perceive one and the feedback self-efficacy, i.e., the conviction that one can deal with the feedback received (Linderbaum & Levy, 2010).

Summary and Final Consideration

Coaching is an externally guided, explicit, individual learning process of the client, which promotes learning on the basis of self-regulation processes. The coach should help to diagnose which client-related learning prerequisites still need to be developed first (such as a feedback orientation), and can then serve as a stimulus for the transition to the next phase in the individual phases of self-regulated learning with their interventions. In the phase of goal definition, for example, the important task of the coach is to develop such goals together with the client who withstand both OTIUM checks, so that a "defective intention" is prevented and the behavioral change intention is maintained. Nevertheless, the coach(s) can choose interventions that include concrete exercises for changing behavior, such as video feedback techniques.

It is the task of the coach to consider which phases of self-regulation the client can initiate and carry out independently and which must be explicitly initiated or maintained by the coach.

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Meaning as a Topic in Coaching

Reinhard Stelter

Introduction

> The man who regards his own life and that of his fellow-creatures as meaningless is not merely unfortunate but almost disqualified for life. Albert Einstein (2006)

The question of meaning is probably the central question for humans in general. Why do I live? What do I want to do with my life, my career, my relationship, my living together etc.? Where does the drive to live come from? This question has been explored by people—believers, unbelievers, scholars, scientists and everyone—at all times. Therefore, a certain humble attitude is certainly more than appropriate when writing this chapter. The author is neither a trained theologian nor a philosopher but draws his knowledge from a broad social science education and from psychology. Over the last two decades he has focused on coaching, learning and identity development.

Case Study: Eve's Quest for Freedom

To make it easier for the reader to enter the topic, Eve is briefly introduced:

> Eve, in her early 30s with an academic education, has come to me for coaching several times now. She is an ambitious project manager in an educational institution with great personal responsibility and opportunities for development. In one of the sessions we talk about the expectations that colleagues and especially her boss have of her. She has a hard time setting boundaries. There are no 'natural' boundaries between her work and personal life in her job, but she insists that her work phone is switched off after hours and she is very reluctant to work beyond her normal working hours. 'Being with my friends really means a lot to me—I

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need time and peace and quiet for that, and I also love to dance Salsa. My free time is more than important to me', she emphasizes. Together with Eve, I examine her dilemma: what is hidden behind the expectations of colleagues and her boss on the one hand, and what significance does her great desire for leisure have on the other? We examine her feelings at work, her satisfaction when she moves things, when she can make a difference. We also examine her experiences in her free time, her desire to dance and spend time with people. How does Eve seek and find meaning in her existence? At some point I ask Eve what 'freedom' means to her. At first, she was a little surprised about this, but after my explanation that it seems to me to be useful to examine an abstract and generally human concept, she was very interested to reflect this concept together with me.

The question of meaning seems to become more and more important in our hypercomplex society. The next section is intended to explore this further.

Why Is the Question of Meaning So Important, Especially Today?

Over the past three decades, social and individual working and living conditions have changed significantly, which makes a new approach to coaching with a special emphasis on creating meaning and reflecting on values appear necessary and desirable.

Our society has changed fundamentally and radically, and we are all fundamentally affected by it. We live in a time of globality (Beck, 2000). Global factors have a direct local impact. Just think of the crisis of displaced persons and refugees in late summer 2015, which Europe and its people had to overcome. The global COVID-19 pandemic of the years 2020–2021 is the latest example how globalization has an impact on all our lives.

In our late or post-modern society, characterized by hypercomplexity, the individual faces a growing diversity of social spheres, each following its own independent logic of development. Different social contexts create their own organization and culture, and their members develop their own modes of communication and logics of perception under the influence of their local culture. Society as a whole is losing its inner coherence. The German sociologist Niklas Luhmann (1998) uses the term 'hypercomplexity' to describe the fact that everything in society can be described and arranged in different ways. There are no longer any clear, unambiguous definitions. The English sociologist Anthony Giddens analyses the everyday effects of the enormous social changes of late modernity and notes that 'in the context of a post-traditional order, the self becomes a *reflexive project*' (Giddens, 1991, p. 32; italics in the original; see also *self-reflection* in this handbook). This brings the question of personal and social identity to the fore. The question of one's own self, of identity, is also always a question of meaning. In traditional societies this question did not arise in the same way. Meaning was given to a much greater extent than today by faith and by anchoring the individual(s) in a stable social context.

In addition, there has been a paradigm shift from the disciplinary society, which Foucault (2002) still spoke of, to an extreme meritocracy. The meritocracy shifts the responsibility for action almost exclusively to the individual(s). It is no longer obedience that is the decisive factor for working, but self-drive. The performance subject disciplines itself. The South Korean-German philosopher Byung-Chul Han (2015) expresses this in his book 'The Burnout Society' as follows:

The achievement-subject stands free from any external instance of domination [Herrschaftsinstanz] forcing it into work, much less exploiting it. It is lord and master of itself. It is subject to no one—or, as the case may be, only to itself. It differs from the obedience-subject on this score. However, the disappearance of domination does not entail freedom. Instead, it makes freedom and constraint coincide (Han, 2015, p. 11).

These forms of self-discipline lead, among other things, to an increase in depression, self-doubt, burn-out, and stress (Ehrenberg, 2010). Social norms and discourses have a massive influence on the emergence of psychological dysfunctions such as stress (Kierkegaard & Brinkmann, 2015) and on the development of the self in a broader sense. The self loses support and a basic orientation that clearly includes personal values, wishes and questions of meaning as the basis of life.

Han (2017) therefore pleads for the 'art of lingering', which he sees as a necessity for mental survival. This art is to be unfolded here in a form of coaching that incorporates questions of meaning and value reflection as a central perspective.

What Is Meaning?

Meaning stems from low-German word *meninge* and is explained with reference to words such as 'sense, import, intent'. The word 'intent' implies a clear action dimension: by acting, we find meaning and make sense of the world. The German word *Sinn* is closely related to the concept of meaning. The German Sinn comes from Latin sensus: 'perceive, feel, know' and the proto-Indo-European *sent*: to give or take a certain direction (see Stelter, 2019). On this basis one can state: When you give *direction to* things and your life, meaning is born. Based on perception and sensing, our consciousness of, our thinking about and understanding of things unfold. This direction also seems to become clear to Eve when she asked herself the question 'What does freedom mean to you?'...

An important basis for the understanding of meaning is provided by Victor E. Frankl, professor of neurology and psychiatry, who died in 1997. Frankl was imprisoned in several concentration camps and survived this barbarous madness. In the time that followed, he became very preoccupied with the topic of meaning, probably also because he was able to somehow find a meaning for himself in this outrageous situation after all. On the basis of phenomenological theory, Frankle (1988) proposes *finding and fulfilling meaning* as the basic striving of a human being. Finding meaning describes the active process of a person to deal with her life world and thus to find meaning in her life. According to the Gestalt psychologist

Max Wertheimer, every life situation has a demanding character. In every situation, the individual establishes a relation of meaning to his environment. In the interaction between person and situation, the person strives for meaning. Following phenomenological theory, Frankl speaks of the *will to meaning* and thus starts out from the basic assumption that man, because of their consciousness, always strives to fulfill meaning in their world.

Finding Meaning Through Coaching

Originally, coaching was strongly associated with sports, performance and goal achievement. The objective was often to help a person to release their potential in the best possible way to best realize and achieve their goals. This narrow focus on goals and clearly defined problems, which is the central perspective of this coaching approach, is increasingly criticized in the literature (David et al., 2013). A close look at objectives is short-lived and does not ensure the sustainability of the dialogue. It has also been shown that goals can change during the discussion process (Ordóñez et al., 2009). Therefore, a broad approach with a view to the purpose and meaning of work and life activities has become necessary. Organizational researchers Weick and Sutcliffe (2015) observe a tendency towards mindlessness, which they describe as a form of mental activity in which people follow fixed guidelines, apply old categories to what they see, act with rigidity or operate in autopilot mode. But the world is too complex to predict development processes in relation to narrowly defined goals.

This closely goal-oriented coaching can be described as the first generation in coaching (Stelter, 2014a, 2014b, 2019). In the second generation, the central coaching perspective has already shifted. Here one tries to build more on the possible strengths of the clients and to imagine solutions that are to be sought in specific contexts, which the clients have either experienced or which are to expand the previous view of the clients in reflective and investigative thought experiment.

In a third generation of coaching (Stelter, 2014a, 2014b, 2019) the coach acts as a co-reflecting partner, and moments of symmetry arise in the dialogue between coach and client. A central goal of this coaching dialogue is to strengthen the ability of the clients to reflect. He or she should learn to accept hypercomplexity. In addition, the focus on the personal and social *creation of meaning* or *finding meaning*—a process that includes the different life contexts of the clients—serves to broaden the individual horizon. Finally, a narrative-collaborative perspective in the coaching dialogue can be designed in such a way that, firstly, the coherence regarding the clients' self-understanding is strengthened and, secondly, events are experienced as connected, and past, present and future are experienced as integrated in a coherent way.

On the basis of earlier empirical and theoretical studies (Stacy, 2001), the complexity researcher Stacy (2012) recommends a 'conversational, reflexive narrative inquiry' (p. 95) as the most suitable for all types of coaching and thus also as an alternative to restrictive regulations and procedures (e.g. the closely goal-oriented

procedure of the GROW model). In view of the increasing complexity of our life situation, a new and more reflective approach seems necessary for all forms of dialogue and development processes. More than ever, we must live with the risk of misjudgment. One strategy is to consciously adopt a meta-position in a space of continuous reflection, i.e. a reflected and investigative attitude towards one's own self-reflexivity. And here the coaching dialogue can play a central role in the search for and finding of meaning.

Finding and Fulfilling Meaning as a Central Task in Coaching

Making meaning is seen as one of the most important means of enabling depth in the coaching dialogue (Stelter, 2007). Making meaning occurs when we attribute certain values to our experiences, actions, interactions with others and our personal and professional circumstances. Things become meaningful and find meaning when we understand our feelings, thoughts and actions, for example by telling stories about ourselves and the world we live in. Making and shaping meaning is based on past experiences and expectations of the future and is the holistic attempt to integrate past and present experiences and assumptions about the future.

Meaning making is always directed towards the environment, and meaning is therefore always the result of the interplay of the person with their environment. This orientation of individuals towards their environment is described by the term *intentionality*. Three levels can be distinguished in the attempt to create a hierarchy of intentionality (see Fig. 1).

As already mentioned, traditional coaching of the older and first generation is strongly rooted in the lowest level of intentionality. In *Third Generation Coaching* (Stelter, 2014a, 2014b) the coach—in cooperation with his client—strives to raise the dialogue as often as possible to the level of meaning and values. In *Third Generation Coaching* is creating meaning and finding the common perspective and common aspiration of both clients. In this process of joint reflection and creation

Fig. 1 The three levels of intentionality (Stelter, 2014a; Nitsch, 1986; the red (when the print is in colour—Otherwise dashed -The arrow must be adjusted accordingly) The read arrow: value → meaning describes the protreptic (value-oriented) approach— more on this later)
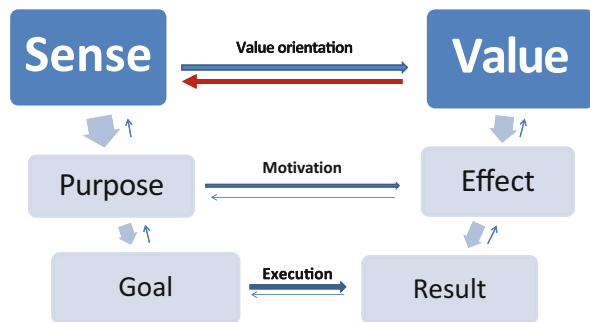
of meaning, it also results that both sides enter a temporarily symmetrical partnership. How this looks like will be described later.

Three Approaches to Creating and Making Meaning

Making meaning marks the integration of individual and socio-cultural processes. For the understanding of individual processes, a phenomenological-existentialist understanding of theory is used (Merleau-Ponty, 2014; Jacob, 2019; Spinelli, 1989; Zahavi, 2018) and for the understanding of socio-cultural processes, social constructionist theory (Gergen, 2015) is used. The integration of both theoretical approaches is certainly an epistemological balancing act, but from a pragmatic perspective it seems to make sense. Phenomenology lacks social reference, which is complemented by social constructionism, and vice versa: the exclusively relational, social constructionist understanding is fertilized by phenomenology (see comparable initiatives by Crossley, 2003 and Shotter, 2006).

In the following, a distinction is made between three ways of making meaning:

- A starting point for the coaching intervention is the individual experience and the *personal creation of meaning* of the client. In cooperation with the coach, the client tries to explore their subjective reality or subjective perception and experience of a specific situation or cultural context. Questions like 'How does it feel? ' or 'How did you perceive the situation? ' help with that. A very suitable method to capture the complexity of the situation is a description through metaphors (Gendlin, 2016). The focus is on the implicit and often sensual-physical dimensions of a selected situation, activity or individual that play a role for the client in the case at hand. This perspective can illuminate and shed light on essential and existentially significant experiences and values in memory—especially uplifting moments—that feel good and important to the person themselves. The process of meaning-making creates a connection to certain practices, habits and routines that are embedded in the client's flow of action. The aesthetic-sensory attention that the client tries to express in words is the basis for understanding the inherent meaning of their actions.
- The second important starting point for the form of narrative-collaborative coaching presented here is the question of how *meaning is created in a process of collaboration between coach and client*. The client brings their own perceived reality into the dialogue, a reality which does not have to be the final reality, but which can change in interaction with the coach. For example, the coach can focus attention on the exception to the rule, where the client has succeeded in doing things. By changing the perspective, the narration can change during the conversation. As an active and co-designing participant, the coach can succeed in drawing the attention of the client to other parts of their life and thus, under certain circumstances, in seeing certain life contexts in a new light. In this sense, the coach is given a role as a proactive co-creator.

- In addition, there is a third form which takes its *starting point in certain central values* which then implicitly create meaning and lead the client to develop a basic capacity for action; an action which is related to and based on the reflected values or concepts (in the case described above: freedom). This third form of creating and finding meaning is called protreptic (coaching) dialogue (Kirkeby, 2009). In Fig. 1 this shape is represented by the red one (when the print is in colour). Otherwise dotted—Accordingly, the arrow must be adjusted arrow value → meaning made clear. The word *Protreptikos* comes from the Greek and describes the striving and the art of directing the attention (of the client) to the core of human existence (see also Aristotle, 2005). Protreptikos is to be understood as a method of self-reflection that is exclusively oriented towards reflection on values and the search for and unfolding of meaning. In contrast to conventional (i.e. exclusively asymmetrical) coaching dialogues in which the coach takes a more or less neutral position towards the problem of the client, protreptic dialogues, which examine meaning and values, aim for an increasing degree of symmetry. In such moments, coach and client try to see each other not as individuals, but as fellow-human companions (Stelter, 2016) who represent something *meaningful* and *valuable* and who have hopes, dreams and convictions. This intensive encounter also took place between Eve and her coach since the term 'freedom' probably plays a central role for every person and thus also for the two of them. Through such a general value-oriented reflection, possible new perspectives for future actions can be anchored in coaching.

These three approaches to meaning making should not necessarily be seen and treated separately in the concrete dialogue. On the other hand, they are important points of orientation and structuring for dialogue. The questions that coach and client ask themselves therefore go in three directions: (1) are we looking for a common deepening of ourselves in certain experiences that the client directly connects with experienced or possible situations (the phenomenological-existentialist perspective)? (2) are we looking for an understanding of how certain relationships with others determine or influence the client's self-image and self-concept and how specific social contexts shape the person in a certain way (the social constructionist perspective)? Or (3) do we examine certain central concepts and values that may be of central importance for the client and that help to explore what is generally *meaningful* and *valuable* and thus to gain a deeper readiness to deal with possible upcoming situations and events (the protreptic perspective)?

Approach to the Practice of Meaning Making

The three questions just posed will now be examined and described in more detail in the following to give the reader an aid for their own coaching practice. However, it is important to emphasize that the overriding basic attitude towards coaching is the decisive factor, i.e. the coach must have the perspective of meaning making as the

central perspective for the dialogue. It is about the *art of lingering* (Han, 2017; Stelter, 2019) and not about a *quick fix*.

Joint Immersion in Certain Experiences

Personal experience is partly silent or tacit knowledge that is bodily anchored and not directly 'retrievable' in language. Our practical actions in everyday life and at work are in many cases based on *embodiment*, which is expressed as a unity of perception and action (Gallagher, 2005; Merleau-Ponty, 2014; see *embodiment* in this handbook). In the non-dualistic understanding of phenomenology, one speaks of the incorporation of our environment, which unfolds, for example, in certain habits and routines. If we are looking for a linguistically reflected, explicit access to our bodily (tacit) knowledge, to our lived experiences and thus to our *subjective environment and reality*, we have to embark on a journey to transform this knowledge into spoken words (Stelter, 2000). This path is not easy to follow, since the holistic experience cannot be directly expressed in language. We gain access by *focusing on what is felt but not yet known*, which the psychologist and psychotherapist Gendlin describes as a *felt sense* or *felt meaning,* a bodily but initially unclear perception of a certain situation or person (Gendlin, 2016).

To bring this experienced and implicit knowledge closer to the client, the coach tries to bring the client—and the coach—into an accepting, investigative and playfully discovering attitude. To transform the analogous information mode of experience into linguistic expression, *metaphors and linguistic images are best* suited to capture and express this experience. It is important to be open to what is coming, i.e. to adopt a basic attitude that is called an *epoch in* phenomenology (Varela & Shear, 2000). It is about pausing and tracing the experience, without falling into the trap of Evaluating or judging this experience in any way.

In this process, an expanded and new understanding of the specific situation or concrete experience slowly moves into the focus of the client. What was initially a diffuse or dull feeling, becomes clear and distinct with the degree of tracing.

Furthermore, specific situations that are of central importance for the client can be examined more deeply through a *sharpened view*. Here are some examples of questions: 'What qualifications and interests do you have for the job?' What do others expect of you? 'Regarding the conflict with person A and you, how does B or C view your situation?' Elsewhere I speak of the *situation-specific view* (Stelter, 2014a). In this process it is important to support the client in their reflections on the situation, i.e. to include previous or comparable experiences and to examine their own expectations, interests and existing competencies and those of others, as well as personal attitudes, general conditions, the attitude of others—and including possible consequences and future possibilities.

This deepening and examination of one's own experience gives the client the opportunity to get to know their subjective world and reality more closely by taking the words into account. Often thoughts only become clear when they are expressed.

This also gives the chance to discover and experience new meaning. New meaning arises from a deeper understanding of the lived experience in certain situations.

Examine and Change Relationships with Others

Relationships with others, being interwoven in social networks—virtually or in direct contact—play a decisive role in life in our time. To grasp the significance of this relational dimension, social constructionist theories are used (Gergen, 2015). In this approach, it is not so much concrete experiences that play a central role in self-understanding, but rather certain discursive forms of practice that have developed in society, in organizations, in teams or groups and that form the basis for what the individual sees as social reality. Reality is not described here as sensual and bodily experienced, but rather arises as a product of social relationships. This understanding is about seeing and understanding oneself in the network of social references. Meaning develops and forms in and through relationships and through certain patterns of action that are recognized and promoted in the social context. Seen in this way, one can also become the plaything of social relationships and thus get the impression that one 'loses oneself' and is no longer master/wife of oneself.

Experiencing oneself as a person with energy and power to act becomes a challenge here. Certain narratives or narratives that have crystallized for the person in certain social contexts can become a burden for the person. Coping with this burden can become a task that the person can work on in cooperation with a coach. With the help of a narrative-cooperative approach (Stelter, 2014a, 2019), certain incriminating narratives can also be deconstructed in the coaching dialogue by reassessing certain events, revitalizing forgotten events, personal relationships or situations and thus slowly creating new meaning from an originally incriminating narrative. Meaning is formed in the cooperation between coach and client. The coach themselves has an active part in the redesign of narratives. The coach's *self-referential and non-judgmental reflections* on what the client brings forward can become a fruitful enrichment, which can trigger a new understanding of themselves and certain events for the client.

Reflection on Values and Questions of Meaning in the Protreptic Dialogue

Protreptically inspired coaching detaches itself from the concrete context. Here, the coach can best contribute to the dialogue as an equal and co-reflecting partner, as the conversation is on a generally human and anonymous level. To develop this form of dialogue, the dialogue partners circle around central concepts or values. For

example: What does *social responsibility* mean to you? This term is now being intensively examined in the discussion:

1. *As a term in itself*, e.g.: What does *social responsibility* as a concept mean? How do you thematize *social responsibility*? Where does *social responsibility* play a special role? What forms of *social responsibility* do you know? What is the *opposite of social responsibility*?
2. *As a feeling or mood*, for example: How and when do you realize the importance of social responsibility?
3. *As something malleable, meaningful and valuable*, for example What does *social responsibility* mean in your life? Are there people you admire in their exercise of social responsibility? How do you show *social responsibility* in your life?

In a sense, Frankl's three value categories can be applied here as reflection categories as follows, as the first *attitude category*, second *experience category* and third *creative category* (Frankle, 1988).

Protreptically inspired dialogues strive to guide the client and oneself in the position of the coach to the essential for life fulfilment and self-realization. Therefore, the preservation of the general human and a certain form of abstractness in dialogue is a central prerequisite for the success of the discussion process.

Conclusion

This chapter should make it clear how new power can be added to coaching, a power based on *meaning making* as a central perspective for dialogue. Making meaning is the source of life fulfilment and self-discovery. In a world that is increasingly characterized by diversification in all areas of life and by a growing pressure for *self-realization*, the search for and meaning making becomes a central personal task—but also a task which organizations, companies, schools and other institutions should consider to a greater extent than before. The perspective of meaning is receiving increasing attention in leadership and management literature (Stacy, 2001), but has so far (incomprehensibly) been a marginal topic in coaching. Therefore, the need for further theory development and applied research is also very high. It is to be hoped that coaching with a view to the question of meaning can contribute to this.

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Means of Verbal and Non-verbal Communication in Coaching

Astrid Schütz and Christine Kaul

Introductory Example

David would like to discuss options for change in a professional situation that he describes as *deadlocked* and *hopeless*. The coach uses the method of the lifeline and asks him to physically walk his professional path on a line in the room. The client marks turning points, decisions, situations, and persons that became significant during his professional career with paper cards. Beyond the current point in time, the line will be extended to the desired target state.

Communication is important in all phases of coaching. In the lifeline method of career planning described above (Lauterbach, 2007), verbal communication is supported by visualization. "The client has the possibility to walk along his lifeline with the corresponding intermediate stations in space, to move through his life and to develop his future scenario on the place of the selected point in time [. . .] Altogether, the life path is brought into space in such a way that detailed explorations, symbolizations, dialogues between the lifetimes and the development of concrete steps become possible (Lauterbach, 2007, p. 66)".

During the conversation about the above-mentioned stages of life, there is also the opportunity to observe spontaneous emotional expression through non-verbal behavior. Reporting them to the client supports them in becoming aware of less reflected attitudes. For example, when David describes a confrontation with a superior, he shows characteristic gestures (clenching fists) and facial expressions (hanging corners of the mouth). This spontaneous expression of emotion becomes

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the subject of (self-)reflection in the subsequent coaching work, as the coach reflects observations and points to non-verbal behavior.[1] In coaching, verbal and non-verbal means can be used in a targeted manner to address clients on a cognitive and emotional level and thus support reflection, emotional experience, and preparation for action (see chapter "Implicit Leadership Theories and Their Significance in Coaching").

This chapter discusses the importance of communication tools for coaching. The text is intended to inspire coaches to reflect on their own communication and to use communicative means in a targeted manner. We will first outline the framework conditions of communicative situations and then go into the importance of verbal and non-verbal means of communication in coaching.

The Importance of Verbal and Non-verbal Communication in Coaching

Communication in the coaching context differs from everyday communication in the asymmetrical distribution of questions and self-disclosure: While everyday communication is characterized by balanced and reciprocal self-disclosure of the interaction partners, the usual role distribution in coaching sees the coach mainly asking questions and the client presenting their experience in the sense of self-disclosure.

One of the main goals of coaching is to sensitize the clients to their own sensitivities and to find a coherent identity in the professional context (Riedelbauch & Laux, 2011). Coaches can support this process through the targeted use of verbal and non-verbal communication. Self-reflection can be supported in this process by means like focusing, substantiating, or slow-motion observation (Geißler, 2009). By asking questions, clients can also be helped to become diagnosticians of themselves and to recognize talents and abilities that have not yet been discovered (Heppelter & Möller, 2013). Before we go into detail about the means of verbal and non-verbal communication, we would like to briefly discuss the general conditions of coaching communication.

Relevant Framework Conditions of Coaching Communication

The term communication goes back to the Latin word *communicatio* and denotes a process in which people relate to each other by exchanging signs and symbols (Röhner & Schütz, 2021). For successful communication, a common repertoire of signs and symbols is necessary. An important basis for this is a shared background of experience and knowledge. This aspect becomes particularly important when the coach and client come from different cultural or socio-economic backgrounds.

The empirically well-founded model by Hargie and Dickson (2004) describes communication as a dynamic and interactive process in which both persons involved send and receive information in a defined context. The roles of the discussion partners, the environment, and the goals of the people involved have a significant influence on the communication process. Coaches should systematically reflect on them for a goal-oriented communicative process.

Roles

Roles define the appropriate behavior in a certain context and thus influence the expectations of the coach and client. Explicit clarification of roles is of crucial importance for the success of a coaching session and usually takes place in the first meeting. Typically, the roles are complementary on the one hand, and on the other hand, they are directed toward a relationship at the peer level.

For the role of the coach in the context of large companies, the question of whether they are *internal* or *external* coaches is also decisive. In the former case, questions of mutual expectations, the possibility of intervention in company affairs, internal power relations, and confidentiality (Schreyögg, 1995) are relevant in a different way than in the latter. In both cases, a clear clarification in the initial consultation is essential.

Environment

Environmental conditions can play a role from many perspectives, depending on the case. Environmental factors can be reflected upon or influenced, or they determine the communication in coaching. A concrete aspect is a spatial environment in the coaching discussion.

With the exception of in vivo *coaching,* coaching sessions are usually not conducted at the workplace. A different environment ensures freedom from disturbances and the client's privacy. The office space may also represent a potential conflict milieu and may thus be detrimental to the reflection detached from everyday

(working) life. The specific design of the coaching room is another aspect to be considered. Coaches, therefore, make every effort to make their premises both professional and pleasant, thus promoting relaxation and creativity.

Target Structure

An essential element of the first discussions between coach and client is the question of the client's goals—in a general form and concretely related to the coaching, both on the content and process level: What is to be achieved with this coaching and how is it to come about? The HOW lies mainly in the professional responsibility of the coach but should be made transparent to the client and coordinated with them. The reflection on goals will also be a recurring theme in the coaching process, as these may expand or change over time. As a rule, a coach supports the client in setting realistic but challenging goals and planning measures on the way to achieving them, in line with the theory of objectives (Locke & Latham, 1990). Besides conscious and reflected goals, implicit goals also play a role. Coaches can use plan and scheme analysis to develop these from the interpersonal behavior of clients (Caspar, 2009). Non-verbal aspects play an important role here (Schütz et al., 1997). In the following, we will discuss verbal and non-verbal means of communication in their importance in coaching.

Use of Verbal Means of Communication

Verbal communication uses language and can thus encourage self-reflection and offer alternative perspectives. In the following, we will discuss means whose importance is sometimes underestimated from our point of view: Listening, asking questions, keywords, metaphors, metacommunication, and humor.

Listening

Listening is the first and most important tool of the coach, since listening is essential for understanding (Imhof, 2003, chapter "Understanding and Its Importance in Coaching") and signals appreciation. The client's attention can also be focused by means of targeted paraphrasing. Active listening was first described by Rogers (1961) and later by Tausch and Tausch (1979) in Germany as a central therapeutic tool. It can be used analogously in coaching: Active listening helps to identify whether the message was understood as the client intended. It continues to support the client in experiencing and understanding their emotions with increasing precision and intensity (see Röhner & Schütz, 2021).

Table 1 Phases of the socratic dialogue (after Stavemann, 2007)

1.	Selection of the topic or the problematic area
2.	First attempts at representation by the client (i.e., *What is this? What is it exactly*)
3.	Concretion of the question and detailing of the everyday reference
4.	Further specification or rewording
5.	Functional, content-wise logical disputation of the presented problem view or dysfunctional thought patterns
6.	Directing to a functional, consistent, or at least alternative model of the problem area
7.	Summary and considerations on behavioral alternatives

Active listening includes:

1. Active following of what is said (attention is signaled by eye contact, sounds like mmmh or similar),
2. Active understanding of the message (checking that what has been said has been understood by describing the core of the message in one's own words),
3. Mirroring (the emotional content of a message is reproduced).

Essential for listening is the self-reflection of the coach (chapter "Transmission and Counter-Transmission in Their Importance for Coaching"). Supervision is also helpful here, so that listening is not inappropriately selective and does not merely serve to confirm one's own working hypotheses.

Questions

The first step is to gather information by asking questions. In addition, questions can stimulate the client's self-reflection, possibly invite for differentiation or open up new ways of thinking in the sense of a humorous challenge (Farelly & Brandsma, 1989). The aim is to support clients in gaining access to multilayered levels of experience connected with feelings. Especially clients from management often find it difficult to find such an approach without specific support through questions from the coach.

The Socratic Dialogue is a successful approach to changing ingrained dysfunctional patterns of thought. With this so-called maieutics (midwifery art) the client's self-image should be deepened, and the client should become the discoverer of *their own problems*. In this way, their potential for self-design is to be strengthened. The coach acts as a *midwife,* stimulating self-exploration and ever greater detailing of the subject matter through resource-oriented, simple, often *naive* questions. This *birth process* consists of seven steps (see Table 1).

There are different types of questions. These can be used specifically for various purposes. Closed questions are helpful for structuring a conversation. However, when used frequently, they easily give the impression of an interrogation and should therefore alternate with open questions (Rentzsch & Schütz, 2009). Circular

questions, for example, are helpful in supporting a change of perspective. Typical questions for a solution-oriented approach (De Shazer, 1985) are: (1) questions about exceptions—i.e., questions about the situations in which the problem does not occur, (2) scaling questions (e.g., *how often* ..., *how strongly* ...) help to show the subjective extent of a problem and to clarify differences or changes experienced, (3) the so-called miracle question enables the visualization and operationalization of the target state.

Metacommunication

An important and effective linguistic tool in coaching is the so-called *metacommunication*: it helps to avoid misunderstandings and explain subjective interpretations. Metacommunication is communication about communication (Watzlawick et al., 1967). Metacommunication is used to comment on what has been communicated. Coach and client thus assure themselves of how the communicated is to be understood and evaluated. In this way, the coach can also give the client feedback on their conversational and interactional behavior and thus serve as a mirror in which the client can identify resources as well as dysfunctional communication patterns.

Keywords and Phrases

Key words and key phrases are verbal elements that "stand out in the flow of the other's speech [...] because of their special emphasis, a particular gesture, an unusual timbre or a very peculiar use" (Rentel, 2010, p. 52). On the one hand, a coach can consciously establish certain terms as key words and, for example, describe coaching as the client's *time-out* or *free space*. It may be even more important, however, to perceive corresponding preferred formulations of the client and thus gain a better understanding of his subjective world view. The relationship between coach and client can also be shaped by taking up central concepts.

Example: Mary often uses the verbal phrase *without an end* in various contexts as a synonym for a *lot* or *too much* in statements like "*they have money without an end he talks without an end* or *she has time without an end*". The coach gets involved with these keywords by questioning them further (What *does this mean exactly? Is there ever an end?* (see Method of the Socratic Dialogue above). During the conversation the client and coach discover that Mary often experiences herself as limited. As a single parent and job-seeking engineer she earns extra money as a childminder. She lacks the money and time to pursue her technical interests. Furthermore it shows that her siblings tend to *cut her short*. She experiences her speaking engagements in the family circle as low. In her experience her speeches often *end too early*.

By reflecting on the key phrase in this example, the client can access the emotional experience. Active listening and focusing on the client's language usage make it easier to discover such key terms. Accompanying non-verbal signals are a further orientation aid for finding central terms and phrases. In the above example, it is a paraverbal aspect *without end*, which is pronounced with particular strength (Rentel, 2010).

Metaphors

A metaphor is a linguistic element that is intended to evoke an image in the listener. The use of metaphors is exemplified by comparing the following clients. Peter often uses a war metaphor: he observes two managerial colleagues *shooting each other*, an unpleasant careerist *fights with all his weapons* or is *up to something,* etc. The language of Carol is dominated by sports metaphors: she has *made* herself *fit for discussion* or her supervisor *plays hard but always fair*.

Metaphors can illustrate what is said, can be anchors, and give inspiration. They can become the starting point for helpful reflections by establishing and switching between the pictorial, lexical, and factual levels (Morgan, 2008). They can therefore be used in many ways in coaching. First, it is helpful for relationship building when coaches engage with the metaphors of clients. Second, the joint reflection on metaphors can make patterns of thought and perception clear (Looss, 2013). Third, the change of metaphors can pave the way for new patterns of thought and action.

It is easy to understand how the different metaphorical worlds in the above example can shape the perception and behavior of the respective clients in everyday work. A long-term stay in a *metaphorical world* can limit thought patterns and behavioral repertoire to what is possible in this world. A change of metaphors in the coaching process can therefore reveal alternatives and enable new experiences. Humor is another tool that shows unusual alternatives and can encourage lateral thinking.

Humor

Humor can be used in the form of wit and comedy to positively shape relationships. However, well-meaning humor is to be distinguished from aggressive sarcasm. Humor can help to reduce stressful lives and improve working relationships (Mesmer-Magnus et al., 2012). For example, laughter can have a liberating effect in coaching. Humor can also soften the hardness of what is said. In terms of the productive use of humor, Dornaus (2016) has developed a coaching approach stating that humor can be used as a means of communication to promote creativity and innovation. An important prerequisite for the productive use of humor in coaching is, besides appreciation, a good coaching relationship.

Use of Non-verbal Means of Communication

Non-verbal communication means everything that is not communicated with words. This means that non-verbal communication sends messages accompanied by language or even without language. It usually takes place during the interview and is usually accompanying and continuous. It typically indicates the emotional state of the speaker (Richmond & McCroskey, 2000; Röhner & Schütz, 2021). While verbal communication primarily conveys the content of a message, i.e., the WHAT of a message, non-verbal communication conveys in particular HOW the message can be understood.

For example, the client raises both hands and bends *their* index and middle finger several times: With a so-called emblem, a gesture with a fixed meaning *What I say now, I say in quotation marks!* the speaker distances themselves in a certain way from what is said.

The dominance of non-verbal elements over verbal ones, especially in the case of disagreement, has been investigated experimentally (Jacob et al., 2013): When verbal and non-verbal messages contradict each other, listeners tend to believe the non-verbal message. It is interesting to note that this effect is more pronounced in emotionally more intelligent people than in less emotionally intelligent people. Emotional intelligence is characterized, among other things, by the ability to recognize emotions in facial expressions. Since emotionally intelligent people are good at deciphering non-verbal messages, they have probably repeatedly experienced that non-verbal messages are more reliable. In the following, selected aspects of non-verbal communication that are particularly important for the coaching situation will be explained in more detail. We will discuss proxemics, haptic signals, and body language in the following.

Proxemics

Proxemics is about shaping personal space and interpersonal distance (Hargie & Dickson, 2004). In coaching, the first question that arises is the spatial relationship between coach and client. Unlike in classical Freudian psychoanalysis, there is no clear guideline for this, although a sitting position at a 90-degree angle to each other at a low table is often experienced as pleasant (Sommer, 1969).

Special forms of intervention make additional movement in space necessary, such as the lifeline method described at the beginning. Space is often also used to illustrate relations. When working with *ground anchors,* objects, chairs, paper cards, and pens are distributed around the room to illustrate a specific situation. The objects represent relevant persons, so in addition to the proximity to each other and to the client, the orientation to the client's position is also important. The coach can subsequently also take over the position of the client, so that the client can view the arrangement from

the outside and use the method in an experience-activating way (chapter "Implicit Leadership Theories and Their Significance in Coaching").

Haptic Signals

Haptic signals, i.e., touches, are used sparingly and consciously in the coaching context. For obvious reasons, they are almost taboo, especially when dealing with clients of the opposite sex. For example, if physical contact is useful in role-playing, coaches ask for permission beforehand. For example, if a client is unable to express their stress load, it may be useful for the coach to create *load* by pushing their hands on the client's shoulders.

Body Language

Body language in the form of gestures, head movements, posture, eye contact, and facial expressions can be used by the coach to give meaning to a statement or to clarify something. Furthermore, by observing the client's body language, the coach can obtain important information and determine, for example, when the client is receptive and what effects an intervention has. Non-intentional signals such as adaptors (e.g., self-touching by the client or nesting on clothing) can be of diagnostic value in that they are usually an expression of insecurity (Rudolph et al., 2010) and show the coach that the client feels uncomfortable with a particular issue.

Body language can be used intentionally to clarify or intensify the experience. In *sculpture work,* for example, the client adopts a certain posture, showing gestures and facial expressions that are typical for the problem situation (Lauterbach, 2007). The sculpture is then discussed and its significance for everyday work is worked out. It is also possible to work with elements from *theater work* to expand linguistic options via non-verbal visualizations.

Conclusion and Outlook

Coaching is an extraordinarily complex communicative process in which verbal messages and non-verbal signals can be used to work on the client's concerns. Coaching is also about reflecting on everyday communication: failing communication and communication problems with superiors, employees, and other actors in the professional environment, and the resulting conflicts are often the reason for coaching. The coaching situation, which is described by a specific distribution of roles, environment, and target structure, can be used as a framework for reflection and as a field of experimentation for new communication patterns.

For coaches, there are various possibilities for targeted work with body language, keywords, or metaphors to stimulate self-reflection and offer alternative perspectives. An often-underestimated skill is listening, which can be trained as well as other elements of communication (Imhof, 2001).

To use communicative strategies effectively, it is also important to be aware of one's own emotional experience and that of the client and to be able to influence it in a goal-directed. Emotional intelligence can therefore be considered an important resource for coaches: it includes the differentiated perception of emotional expression by oneself and others as well as the ability to regulate emotions by oneself and others (Steinmayr et al., 2011). As new studies show, such skills can be trained in a targeted way (Herpertz et al., 2016).

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Mental Disorders in Coaching

Heidi Möller

It is not possible to give an overview of all mental disorders in this chapter. Coaches should therefore be familiar with the content of a textbook on clinical psychology, for instance: Benecke (2014), Barlow (2014), or Gabbard (2014). A rather playful way to become familiar with clinical pictures of different mental disorders is by analyzing people with a mental illness in movies (see, for example, Krainert (2017) or Greenstein (2017) for a list of interesting movies). In order to be able to detect a client's mental disorder and make a differential diagnosis, coaches should have either a current version of the International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems (ICD, e.g., ICD-10; World Health Organization, 2004; Dilling & Freyberger, 2013) or the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM, e.g., DSM-5; American Psychiatric Association, 2013; Falkai & Wittchen, 2014) or another diagnostic manual of mental disorders at hand. For the present chapter, we will have a look into anxiety disorders as an example.

A Case Study

Paul, a 45-year-old engineer and team leader of a large automotive group, engages in his first of three coaching sessions that were organized by the company medical service. During the first coaching session, Paul reports that he struggles with fear of an upcoming team workshop, given that as a manager, he would be the center of attention during the workshop. The idea of giving a presentation in front of an unfamiliar audience was completely inconceivable to him. Even the announcement of business meetings, receptions, or other gatherings with many expected attendees,

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who are also often strangers to Paul, put him in a panicky state of fear. Palpitations, sweating, and blushing are the physiological side effects of his anxiety. Above all, Paul is afraid of openly expressing his possibly different opinion or criticism to authority figures. At a previous meeting, he had taken a seat at the far end of the last row. He had started to tremble and sweat had formed on his forehead, so that he had to leave the room. He describes his fear of not finding the right words when being approached by colleagues.

In his private life, however, he was doing well. At home, he was able to relax and spend an evening with a small group of friends without feeling any social anxiety. He also handles dyadic situations with his employees well (i.e., without experiencing any fear).

Diagnosis: Social Phobia F40.1 (ICD-10)

One speaks of social phobia when there is a pronounced and persistent fear of social situations. Especially in performance situations, people who suffer from social phobia are afraid of being embarrassed in public and of making a fool of oneself. For example, they might experience an excessive fear of job interviews and/or public speaking. Underlying social phobia is the unreasonable fear of being scrutinized, evaluated, and judged by others. The patients, therefore, avoid being the center of attention. They are afraid of talking to strangers at parties. Patients who are not in a relationship find it difficult to approach people they might be interested in (i.e., potential romantic partners). Flirting or going on dates seem like almost impossible tasks. There is a constant fear of being clumsy when writing, eating, or drinking while being watched by others. The same applies to physical activities or participation in competitions. Patients often feel embarrassed and experience both social anxiety and increased self-criticism. They feel exhausted from socializing with colleagues or try to avoid it completely. Open-plan offices or going to the canteen with colleagues demand a great deal of effort (Benecke, 2014; Riechert, 2011).

Diagnostically, a distinction is made between a generalized social phobia that affects all interpersonal contacts and a specific social phobia that occurs in specific situations only (e.g., giving a speech).

The Group of Phobic Disorders

In most European countries, the ICD-10 (International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems; WHO, 2004) is used to classify and diagnose mental disorders. Neurotic, stress-related, and somatoform disorders include both phobic anxiety disorders and other anxiety disorders. Phobic disorders are defined as anxiety that is evoked in certain situations or by certain objects that are not objectively justified. One speaks of a dysfunctional disorder when the fear:

- Is disproportionate.
- Cannot be explained or overcome by reason.
- Is beyond the person's control.
- Causes significant restrictions in daily life.

Patients can avoid their anxiety by avoiding the specific situations and/or object (s). However, they constantly suffer from anticipatory anxiety: the fear of fear.

In the ICD-10, social phobia (F40.1) belongs to the group of *phobic disorders:* "A group of disorders in which anxiety is evoked only, or predominantly, in certain well-defined situations that are not currently dangerous. As a result these situations are characteristically avoided or endured with dread. The patient's concern may be focused on individual symptoms like palpitations or feeling faint and is often associated with secondary fears of dying, losing control, or going mad" (ICD-102019; WHO, 2004).

Agoraphobia (F40.0) also belongs to the group of phobic disorders: "A fairly well-defined cluster of phobias embracing fears of leaving home, entering shops, crowds and public places, or travelling alone in trains, buses or planes" (ibid.). These symptoms can occur with or without a panic disorder.

Furthermore, the ICD-10 lists *specific (isolated) phobias* (F40.2). These are: "Phobias restricted to highly specific situations such as proximity to particular animals, heights, thunder, darkness, flying, closed spaces, urinating or defecating in public toilets, eating certain foods, dentistry, or the sight of blood or injury" (ibid.).

The risk of developing some form of anxiety disorder over the course of a lifetime (i.e., lifetime prevalence) amounts to 14–29%. Therefore, anxiety disorders are the most frequent mental disorder besides depression (Wittchen et al., 2011). According to Wittchen et al. (2011), approximately 2% of the European population (i.e., about 10 million affected cases) suffers from social phobia.

On the Etiology of the Disorder from a Psychodynamic Point of View

According to Freud (1975), an anxiety disorder is triggered by a specific situation of seduction and failure, which initiates an unconscious intrapsychic conflict (e.g., a moral conflict) in the patient (*theory of conflict*). An unconscious fantasy is intra-psychically experienced as a threat, which is then representative of the dangers experienced in the external/outside world (Fig. 1). The phobia becomes a symbol of the inner threat. Put differently, what is feared is the unconscious imagination associated with the feared situation.

Greenson (2000) describes phobia as a defense against fear. One form of fear is used as a defense against another fear. An original impulse of doing something seemingly prohibited becomes the fear of the outside world and can thus be avoided. The original conflict can be overcome and no longer represents a burden for the

Fig. 1 Phobic disorders: From suppression to avoidance (own representation)

Suppression of impulses or desires

⬇

Inner conflict

⬇

Experiences of „inner danger"

⬇

Fear

⬇

Shifting of fear onto the object or siuation in the external world

⬇

Avoidance of external situation
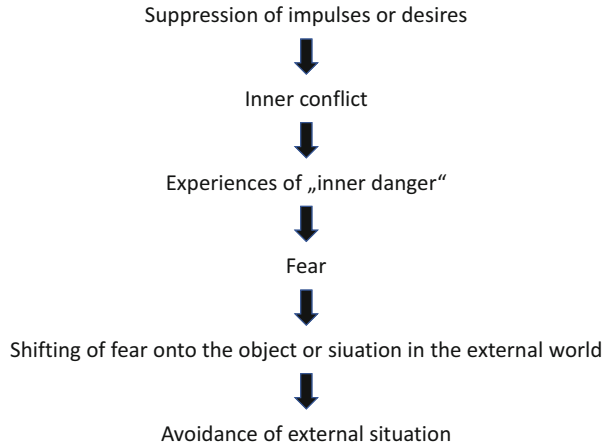
individual and their life. The conflict might also be repressed completely and hence no longer prevents the individual from living their life—until a destabilization through external circumstances occurs. If this process of repression fails completely or no longer succeeds because the conflict that is to be averted is too intense, the only solution that remains is a compromise formation, as a social phobia in the presented case study. Often, the currently experienced conflict unconsciously ties in with similar early, childhood conflict constellations and accordingly, it is experienced from a child's perspective (Bassler, 2002).

In the case of Paul, a conflict with his father may have been reactualized. If, in a restrictive family environment, it was not possible for him to object, criticize or express his own opinion because there was always the threat of massive punishment, his childhood fear could be revived in a situation of conflict with his superior. Paul might not find an adequate way of expressing his aggressive impulses towards his supervisor due to his internalized norms ("One does not object to authority figures."). He might be afraid of falling out of favor with his superiors and of punishment. Furthermore, there exists an unconscious fantasy of not being equal to his father. Paul might not consciously remember the original situation, but the associated sense of threat is still internalized. Social phobia can thus be considered as a suboptimal solution to conflicts between drives or defense mechanisms. In social situations, Paul experiences a fear of being *devalued* or *shamed.* Unconsciously, he usually already feels devalued and has little confidence in himself. He, therefore, prefers coping strategies of retreat and avoidance. An intrapsychic transformation from active ("I want something") to passive ("something is happening to me") takes place. The inner conflict is relieved at the cost of experiencing anxiety.

In addition to the anxiety models based on drive theory, concepts of the psychoanalytical object relations theory can be used to explain social phobia (Mentzos, 1991). According to this theory, internalized negative early interpersonal experiences can lead to a self-image that is characterized by self-doubt or self-insecurity, which in turn promotes fear of failure in future social situations (Bassler, 2002). The

latter is also closely related to shame. Wurmser (1986) attributes feelings of shame to actual experiences of shame from the past in which the child, who misbehaved, is in turn shamed by the parents, e.g., humiliated. The fear of being exposed by others is a core issue of many sociophobic patients.

In the *deficit model* (Benecke, 2014), it is emphasized that traumatic experiences or poor conditions of development might result in a severe deficit in structural integration and thus, in a very low level of tolerance for conflict. Even minimal levels of stress can cause severe anxiety and feelings of being overwhelmed. The lack of conflict resolution strategies is a direct consequence of primary developmental damage that can occur under conditions of gross negligence of basic emotional needs, maltreatment, and/or sexual abuse.

Patients with anxiety disorders usually exhibit insecure attachment patterns (Joraschy & Petrowski, 2003). This can be interpreted as an indication of unresolved loss and/or trauma. However, the associated reaction of grief cannot be felt and is thus avoided (Benecke, 2014). In addition to reduced self-confidence, patients also show an increased level of dependence in their relationships. In social interactions, they experience themselves as being passive, whereas they experience others as being active and exclusively positive. In conflict situations, they display rather submissive behavior. Patients are considered *oversensitive* when it comes to separations. They deny any aggressive impulses. This behavior can be understood as a coping strategy to endure ambivalences that cannot be regulated intrapsychically. "Independence, aggression and desire are fended off in favor of a pseudo-safe relationship" (Benecke, 2014, p. 319). In the patients' imagination, the expression of anger and rage provokes a break-up of the relationship. Therefore, they try to maintain a secure relationship by smiling a lot and avoiding signals of aggressive affect.

Recent research findings indicate a relationship between an inhibited temperament and a stable increased amygdala reaction to foreign social stimuli (Etkin & Wagner, 2007). Roth and Strüber (2014) locate the lack of suitable self-soothing strategies and deficits in the stress processing system.

On the Etiology of the Disorder from a Cognitive-Behavioral Point of View

In his competence-oriented cognitive-behavioral therapeutic model of social phobia, Fydrich (2009) describes mental anticipations of a situation that is assumed to be socially threatening as a trigger for socially fearful behavior. He identifies the patient's psychological vulnerability as the reason for the development of the disorder. This vulnerability stems from the patient's life story and learning history. Unfavorable social modeling (e.g., the family living in seclusion or having rigid norms), but also overprotective, controlling or pejorative parenting styles can be considered as the cause of the disorder. Instability in relationship experiences,

disregard, and a cold and/or indifferent climate in the family promotes the development of maladaptive cognitive schemata. Patients suffering from social anxiety have two main patterns (Benecke, 2014):

1. Their view of themselves: *I am unimportant, I am stupid, I am incapable, I am clumsy, I am not lovable*, etc.
2. Their view of interaction partners: *Other people will judge me, other people are superior to me, other people will humiliate me, other people are smart and competent,* etc.

Patients impose exaggerated standards of behavior in social situations on themselves and tend to catastrophic thinking about the consequences of their behavior. In social situations, their maladaptive cognitive schemata are activated and thus, the situation is interpreted as threatening. Biological vulnerability can be described as a disposition to strong physiological reactions. This vulnerability might further amplify the situation. If, in social situations, the attention is focused on inner cognitive processes of inferior self-evaluation, the physiological arousal increases. Sweating, trembling, and palpitations are perceived as confirmation of the anticipated fear. A vicious cycle is set in motion because the physiological activation and one's own reactions to it are interpreted as being in an increasingly threatening situation. As a result, the individual shows avoidance and safety behavior: retreat, silence, avoiding eye contact, insecure conversational style, and so on. In turn, this behavior negatively impacts social interactions. The patient feels ashamed and evaluates their behavior as a renewed failure (*control loop model*). The self-description as socially incompetent is reinforced and in the future, similar situations are avoided.

Treatment Options for Social Phobia

Possible forms of treatment for social phobia include medication and psychotherapy. The research network SOPHO-NET (Leichsenring et al., 2009), which is funded by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research, conducted a multicenter psychotherapy study. By using a randomized, controlled design, they compared cognitive-behavioral therapy with psychodynamic short-term therapy. Four hundred ninety-five patients suffering from social phobia were randomly divided into three groups. The patients of the first group received cognitive therapy for 9 months, while those of the second group received psychodynamic therapy for 9 months. The third group comprised patients of a waiting list control group and remained untreated for 6 months. As a result, the two psychotherapy groups showed significant improvements of symptoms in 60 and 52% of patients, respectively. In the waiting list control group, it was only 15% of patients who reported improvements. In the two intervention groups, 36 and 26% of patients, respectively, no longer showed any clinical symptoms of social phobia. In both therapy groups, symptoms of depression, which are often associated with social phobia, also improved. Both

psychotherapeutic approaches, therefore, proved to be effective. In contrast to a purely medication-based treatment, the improvement of psychotherapy continued even 2 years after the psychotherapeutic treatment had ended (Leichsenring et al., 2013). According to Leichsenring et al. (2013), the question that now arises is which patients can benefit most from which form of psychotherapy. Since people with social phobia are very different from one another, both cognitive-behavioral and psychodynamic psychotherapy can be helpful: "It is possible that cognitive therapy is more suitable for people who are mainly action-oriented," says Leichsenring (Deutsche Ärztezeitung, 2013, p. 1). During cognitive therapy, patients and therapists develop patterns of action together that make the patient's everyday life easier. Cognitive therapy primarily focuses on dysfunctional cognitions and action patterns, whereas structural aspects or averted desires are not dealt with in greater depth.

"Psychodynamic therapy is more suitable for people who also want to understand what lies behind their fears. It is based on the assumption that the mental disorder is a symptom of unresolved conflicts of relationships in the past which need to be processed" (ibid.). If the patient wants to understand more complex functions of the symptomatology of affects and/or relationships (e.g., to investigate the question: *How do the specific changes in information processing and cognitions occur?*), then a psychodynamic psychotherapy is advisable.

Conclusion for the Coaching Practice

So, should Paul start a coaching process with me, that is, should I accept his coaching request? My answer is no, because Paul shows symptoms of a mental disorder. One might argue: *Well, but given that you are a certified psychotherapist, a few hours with you could help to stabilize Paul.*

It is easier to turn to a coach than applying for psychotherapy. Therefore, in coaching practice, the phenomenon described in the case study is not an isolated case. Seeking help in coaching has a comparatively low threshold, people do not need to wait long for an appointment (e.g., compared to long waiting periods for receiving psychotherapeutic treatment due to limited resources) and the possible stigmatization as a mentally ill employee can be avoided. This is a genuine concern because private insurance companies might charge a so-called risk loading, for example, if someone is diagnosed with a depressive episode of medium severity. It would be inappropriate to alleviate the suffering of a client by providing a few hours of coaching and thereby undermining their motivation to seek psychotherapeutic treatment.

It is a malpractice if coaches who are not trained in psychotherapy engage in coaching with clients with a mental disorder as in the case study described above. In his study on negative effects of coaching (see also in this book the chapter Side Effects of Coaching for Clients and Coaches), Schermuly (2014) showed that from the view of coaches, a key negative effect in coaching is coaches being unable to deal with the processes initiated in coaching. More specifically, 26% of respondents

stated that coaching had triggered deeper problems of the client that could not be dealt with during the coaching engagement. This risk is particularly prevalent when stress and burn-out are the coaching issue. In his survey, Middendorf (2010) found that stress and burn-out were the fourth most frequently reported reasons for coaching in 2009/10. This is not surprising, given the enormous increase in absenteeism due to mental health issues. The German health insurance provider DAK points out that mental illness is by far the "most striking development in the incapacity for work" (DAK, 2013, p. 126). This is due to:

- A growing number of cases of burn-out.
- An increased use of drugs and stimulants by employees.
- The common illnesses depression and anxiety disorder.

According to the "Stress Report 2012" (Lohmann-Haislah, 2012), 16% of survey participants stated that they were pushing the limits of their capacity at work and 19% felt overloaded by their workload. Twenty-four percent reported that they experience emotional exhaustion, which is considered the most common symptom of burn-out (see also in this book the chapters on health, burn-out, and resilience). Twenty-two percent of this subgroup of survey participants were already seeking treatment. The same applies to reasons for early retirement with an increase of 25%.

Greif (2013) argues that: "Coaching is not a healing profession. In current definitions of coaching, in contrast to psychotherapy, the treatment of mental disorders is explicitly excluded (Greif, 2008, p. 53 ff.). Therefore, coaching is not the appropriate intervention in an advanced stage of burn-out, that is, clients showing symptoms that can be diagnosed as mental or psychosomatic disorders. Coaches can only support their clients to counteract the development of future burn-out in the preliminary or early stages of burn-out. Therefore, the correct term that should be used is not 'burn-out coaching' but rather 'burn-out prevention coaching', that is, identifying warning signs and intervening *before* the client develops symptoms of burn-out. Behavior-oriented stress management coaching is always also burn-out prevention coaching. Besides general stress management, burn-out prevention coaching more specifically deals with the client's threat of future overload due to stress, first signs of emotional exhaustion, lack of energy, impaired performance as well as signs of a declining ability to recover from stress (e.g. insufficient recovery after work due to work-related rumination and sleep disorders). These topics characterize the uniqueness of burnout prevention coaching" (Greif, 2013, p. 224).

Coaches who lack clinical training need to build and maintain a professional network that they can utilize. If in doubt whether the coaching issue is indeed a coaching issue (i.e., a work-related issue) or the client might rather need psychotherapy (i.e., showing symptoms of a mental disorder), they can then ask a colleague with clinical diagnostic competence for a differential diagnosis. Furthermore, if the coach him- or herself identifies the need for psychotherapeutic treatment, it is helpful to have access to a pool of good psychotherapists in order to be able to refer coaching clients to them. That is how I proceeded. I referred Paul to an experienced psychotherapist and used another coaching session to reduce his inhibition threshold to seek psychotherapeutic help. I used the second coaching session for psychoeducation; I

explained the clinical picture of social phobia and together, we generated hypotheses as to how the symptoms might have developed. This way, I succeeded in increasing his motivation to seek psychotherapeutic help.

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Mentalization in Coaching

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Introduction

Jane, a manager in an elderly care facility, engages in a coaching process because she would like to clarify her leadership role. In the current coaching session, she reported the following situation: 4 weeks ago, she had a critical discussion with one of her employees who was unwilling to substitute for colleagues and to take unpopular shifts. This employee resigned unexpectedly, while Jane was on vacation for 3 weeks after the critical discussion. The employee had already negotiated the details of the cancelation agreement with the general manager. Jane only learned about the termination, including the already concluded cancelation agreement, through one of her other employees after she returned from her vacation. Neither the employee who resigned nor the general manager had informed her of this in the meantime. Jane is very agitated, feels overwhelmed by the events, is insecure and angry about the decisions made without consulting her, and would like to use the coaching session to prepare a clarification discussion with the employee and/or the general manager.

In the work context, it is not always easy to keep both one's own feelings and thoughts in mind and those of others—colleagues, clients, supervisors. Especially in stressful and burdening situations and in conflicts, as described in the example above, it easily happens that one's own situational perception and current feelings are experienced as the only ones possible and alternative perspectives are no longer accessible.

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Mentalization starts right there: Mentalizing means that we are in contact with our own thoughts, feelings, and motives and that we can also put them into perspective and view them from a distance. The concept of mentalization was first developed in the context of clinical attachment research and became the basis for a new therapeutic approach, *Mentalization-Based Therapy* (MBT) (Bateman & Fonagy, 2008). First attempts have been made to extend the concept of mentalization to organizational and work environments, such as mentalizing in social work (Kirsch, 2014), mentalization-based management (Döring, 2013), and the mentalizing community (Twemlow et al., 2005), and to fostering mentalizing within vocational training institutions (Taubner et al., 2014). The application of the mentalization concept in coaching is also obvious, given that self-reflection plays a central role in coaching (De Haan, 2012; Greif, 2008). In addition, self-management and interpersonal skills are particularly important for managers, the primary target group of coaching. Therefore, this chapter describes the basic features of the mentalization concept and illustrates the benefits of the mentalization concept for coaching.

The Mentalization Concept

Mentalizing according to Fonagy et al. (2002) means that we are in contact with our own goals, wishes, feelings, and motives and that we can also look at them from a distance and change them. Regarding others, mentalizing implies that we assume that they too have comparable mental states and that we can only guess and infer these mental worlds, but never really *know* them. This awareness leads to an attitude of modesty and not-knowing regarding the reasons for the behavior of others and of ourselves, as well as the openness to question oneself and others repeatedly instead of jumping to hasty conclusions.

The British psychoanalysts Peter Fonagy and Mary Target, together with colleagues, developed a psychoanalytically based theory-of-mind (ToM), the theory of mentalization (Fonagy et al., 2002). With their mentalization theory, Fonagy and colleagues focus on a special case of social cognition, namely the way affectively charged or emotionally significant relationships are interpreted (Taubner, 2015). In contrast to classical theories of mind, the ability to mentalize is seen as a developmental achievement that depends particularly on the quality of early relationship experiences. Mentalization abilities can be seen as a *key mental competence* that is based on secure attachment experiences and constitutes the basis for the human ability to understand interpersonal behavior in terms of mental states and to recognize the individual self as the agent of behavior. This awareness is the basis for successful and satisfying relationships, and this also applies to the working world.

Mentalization as a Bridge Between Mindfulness and Empathy

Mentalization theory is an integrative umbrella concept that includes many facets such as mindfulness, empathy, or psychological sensitivity (Allen, 2006). Regarding mindfulness, attention is directed inwardly to one's own experience, including physical reactions. Here too, the integration of cognitive and affective aspects of mental states is emphasized.

The concept of psychological sensitivity is likewise characterized by a focus on both cognitive and affective mental states and refers to both the self and the other. Both mindfulness and psychological sensitivity can be seen as facets of introspection.

Introspection denotes the application of a theory-of-mind to *one's own* mental states. In contrast to mentalization, introspection is a skill that takes place almost exclusively within the framework of explicit reflection, whereas mentalization can also contain automatic and implicit aspects. This implies that people can make systematic mistakes in interpreting others without being aware of them, such as quickly assuming hostility.

Another related concept is empathy, which, like mentalization, also refers more to an automated skill. Empathy describes the sharing of feelings as an accurate reflection of the affective mental state of another person. Thereby, a clear separation between one's own feelings and the feelings of the other person is maintained, which distinguishes empathy from emotional contagion (Decety & Jackson, 2006). Mentalizing, in contrast, implies an understanding of the affective *and* cognitive mental state of the other person based on integrating emotional resonance with the attribution of mental states, i.e., the application of a psychological theory.

An additional concept that overlaps with mentalization is that of affect consciousness, which concerns the relationship between the activation of a basal affect and the ability to be consciously aware of it. However, the focus of affect consciousness as opposed to mentalization is on explicit engagement with the self or other and is limited to affective states.

In summary, it can be concluded that the concept of mentalization encompasses all the dimensions mentioned above: the unconsciously-implicit and consciously-explicit use of the ability to understand both cognitive and affective aspects of mental states in the self and the other (Choi-Kain & Gunderson, 2008). Figure 1 summarizes similarities and differences between the different concepts.

Prementalizing as Non-effective Mentalizing

Developmental psychology assumes that a child between the ages of three and five can mentalize (Fonagy et al., 2002). For this purpose, the child must integrate prementalizing modes of processing emotions and perceptions. Allen et al. (2011) have described *different modes of interpersonal perception and affect processing*

	Object (target person)		Content		Explicitness	
	self	other	cognitive	affective	conscious-explicit	automatic-implicit
Mentalizing	X	X	X	X	X	X
Self-reflection, introspection	X		X	X	X	
Mindfulness, psychological sensitivity	X	X	X	X	X	
Empathy		X		X	X	X
Affect consciousness	X	X		X	X	

Fig. 1 Comparison of mentalization and related concepts

that precede mentalizing developmentally or are (re-)activated when mentalizing fails (Taubner et al., 2010): teleological mode, mode of psychic equivalence, and pretend mode. The failure of mature mentalization abilities is referred to in the following as regression, i.e., a recourse to prementalizing ways of processing that are less mature in terms of qualitative markers of effective mentalizing. Mentalization theory assumes that mature forms of mentalizing can be impaired by external and internal influences and that these mature forms are then no longer available to the individual, e.g., when it comes to clarifying and overcoming interpersonal conflicts. Since the focus of this chapter is the application of mentalization to the working world, we focus on facets of adult prementalization only. For a more detailed description of developmental psychological theory, we refer to the literature (Fonagy et al., 2002; Taubner, 2015).

In the following, the modes of interpersonal perception and affect processing are illustrated using the example of Jane, the manager who came into coaching after one of her employees had unexpectedly resigned after a critical discussion and the cancelation agreement had already been negotiated with the general manager without her.

The lowest level of prementalizing modes in terms of developmental history is the *teleological mode*. It occurs when infants can already combine simple actions with goals, but do not yet attribute intentions as the basis of actions and goals. The infant is still dependent on an adult caregiver to regulate their own emotional states. In the adult's regression to the teleological mode, the environment also has to *function* in order to reduce one's own inner tension. In the example, Jane could see the behavior of her supervisor, the general manager, as clear evidence that the supervisor does not take her seriously. Only an action solution could change this interpretation. She might therefore start off insisting that the general manager must apologize to her personally before she could even envisage further cooperation. Subjectively, the experience dominates that the other person must do something that oneself is not able to do, for example, that they must prove that they still desire cooperation.

Behind this lies the subjective sense that inner states can only be influenced by actions or physical interventions. As a result, only what can be observed is of importance—thoughts, feelings, wishes, etc. take a back seat. The other party may therefore feel misunderstood, manipulated, or pressured, which in turn can contribute to a further escalation of conflict. If, in the example, the general manager refused to apologize, in teleological mode this could again be interpreted as evidence of hostility and a lack of appreciation.

The next developmental stage is the *psychic equivalence mode*, in which mental states that are experienced in one's own self are generalized to others. In this phase, the representational character of mental states is not recognized. Instead, there is a psyche-world isomorphism, i.e., the inner world and the outer reality are experienced as identical. Negative thoughts and feelings are therefore experienced as real and potentially terrible—as it can happen to adults again in panic attacks, nightmares, and flashbacks. A regression to this level results in an intolerance toward alternative perspectives. In the example of Jane, operating in the psychic equivalence mode could lead her to fear that the employee has resigned because of the critical discussion and this, in turn, could trigger feelings of guilt. In the psychic equivalence mode, these mental states are now generalized to one's interaction partner: Jane could thus be convinced that the general manager was going to denigrate her at a higher institutional level behind her back because the employee only resigned because of Jane's poor leadership. This assessment of the situation can trigger acute feelings of being threatened. In the equivalence mode, Jane would not be able to differentiate between her own fears and the actual motives of the general manager, who may not have wanted to burden her during her vacation. Thus, if a person feels hurt in the psychic equivalence mode it is not conceivable that the other person might have had other intentions. For persons operating in this mode, it makes no sense to discuss the motives of their interaction partners, as these already seem clear to the person concerned and do not appear modifiable. Therefore, in the example described, Jane could withdraw in a hurt state instead of discussing her experience of the situation with the general manager.

The third stage, which develops in parallel to the child's play, is called the *pretend mode*. At this stage of psychic experience, mental states are playfully decoupled from reality and thus lose significance in the real world. In the adult, regression to the pretend mode means that the inner world is decoupled from the outer reality and thus thoughts and feelings do not form a bridge between the inside and the outside. This can lead individuals to reflect in a way that does not bring about change or is not helpful for understanding the situation they are in. Regarding the coaching example, a regression to the pretend mode could mean that Jane comes to the conclusion that the general manager always wants to please everyone and is not willing or able to openly deal with conflicts. It is against this background, Jane assumes, that the general manager prematurely approached the employee who wanted to resign as quickly as possible because of a new job, offering her the cancelation agreement and now does not have the courage to tell Jane but instead hopes that by sitting it out, things will sort themselves out. Therefore, one should not be angry about it but would have to tolerate it if one wants to work with the general

manager. In addition to this explanation, she could also resort to other explanatory patterns, such as the more hostile attributions described above. In the pretend mode, different explanatory patterns that may even contradict each other, exist in parallel since they cannot be experienced affectively by the person concerned anyway. Rather, they are emotionally *decoupled.* Here too, it is likely that Jane does not seek a clarifying discussion with the general manager but rather develops ever new explanations, possibly even involving other colleagues, and may get stuck in thinking about the conflict in pseudo-mentalizing ways that sometimes have an intrusive character about the inner world of others.

Stress-Related Mentalization

Recently, the concept of mentalization has been expanded to include mentalization as a dynamic construct, which led to the introduction of a stress-related *switch model* (*the bio-behavioral switch model*; Fig. 2) of mentalization (Fonagy & Luyten, 2009, based on Mayes, 2006). With increasing emotional arousal, specifically with increasing attachment stress, depending on the individual attachment pattern-related coping strategies, a *switch* occurs from rather pre-frontally accentuated, controlled and executive functional modes to a rather automatic processing of mental states (Fig. 2). As a result, the complexity and flexibility of the reflective function decrease, so that with increasing attachment stress, less mature functional modes such as teleological, psychic equivalence, or pretend mode are eventually used. This means that in situations of strong emotional stress, such as a conflict with a partner or supervisor, individuals can no longer resort to their otherwise available mentalization abilities once they reach a specific threshold of the level of stress.
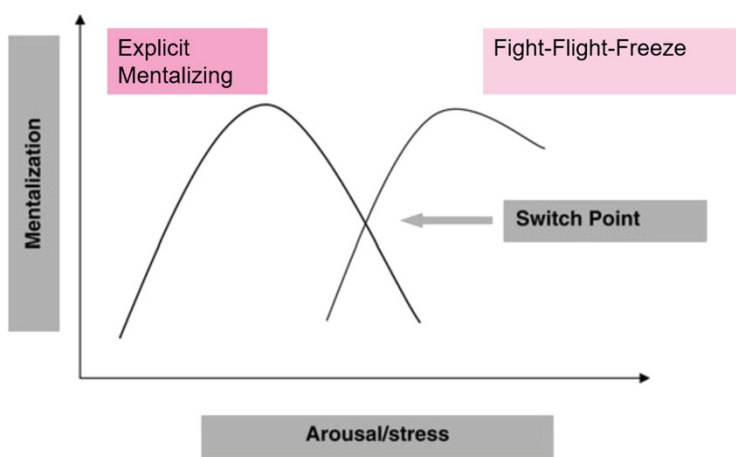
Fig. 2 The stress-related switch model of mentalization (from Taubner, 2015)

A number of empirical studies have supported this model by showing that emotional tension and psychosocial stress lead to an inhibition of mature mentalization, especially when they are related to attachment relationships (Nolte et al., 2013).

Mentalization in an Organizational Context

When transferring the mentalization concept from the psychotherapeutic setting to coaching, the organizational context plays a significant role beyond the coaching dyad for the mentalization ability and possible mentalization failures.

In the professional context, attachment stress is not limited to interpersonal, dyadic interactions, e.g., between supervisor and subordinates (Kafetsios, 2015; Thompson et al., 2015). Attachment to groups and teams within the organization and to the organization as a whole can also be experienced as endangered, leading to failures in the ability to mentalize. Accordingly, initial conceptualizations of attachment in occupational and organizational psychology go beyond dyadic attachment and investigate the attachment to groups, teams, or the organization as a whole and its influence on emotional regulation, job satisfaction, or organizational citizenship behavior (Engel et al., 2015; Game & Crawshaw, 2015; Pheiffer, 2015).

Beyond attachment stress as a trigger for mentalization failures, further factors are at play in the organizational context that may influence mentalization ability. In addition to individual influencing factors (for example, an individual vulnerability in the sense of early *switch points* or resilience in the sense of secure attachment), the ability to mentalize can be influenced by factors at the level of the role (role ambiguities, role conflicts), the team (cohesion, conformity) and the organization as a whole (structure, culture). In addition to group and team processes, organizational characteristics and dynamics influence the mentalization abilities of organization members. Goals, structures, processes, culture, and the organization's broader context can have an effect on mentalizing, either fostering or hindering the development of mentalizing abilities.

Mentalization-Based Management (Döring, 2013) aims at fostering mentalization in organizations. For this purpose, it is necessary to repeatedly clarify the primary task of the entire organization and respective divisions (the *what* of the organization), to check the resources available (*with what*), to describe and optimize processes and procedures (*how*), and to clarify structures (*responsibilities and competencies*). A major role in this is played by management but the responsibility cannot be fully delegated to them. According to Döring (2013), if managers and employees also understand their responsibility to address these four questions, there is a chance that the organization develops toward a mentalizing organization. The interplay of attachment stress, organizational dynamics, and mental ability becomes particularly apparent in the context of strategic change processes and restructuring.

Mentalization in Coaching Practice

Considerations regarding a stance and specific interventions that foster mentalization have been developed in the clinical-therapeutic context. Therefore, we first draw a distinction between the clinical context and workplace coaching. In a next step, we briefly summarize the stance and interventions that foster mentalization according to *Mentalization-Based Treatment* (MBT) and then transfer them to coaching practice.

Differences Between Clinical Context and Coaching

Based on the theory of mentalization and the findings on mentalization impairments, especially in patients with a borderline personality disorder (Fonagy et al., 2011), a therapeutic approach was developed that focused on improving mentalization abilities in this patient group, *Mentalization-Based Treatment* (MBT) (Bateman & Fonagy, 2006). In clinical patient groups, particularly with borderline personality disorders, a general mentalization deficit is assumed, i.e., a systematically limited ability to mentalize.

In contrast, when transferring mentalization to workplace coaching, we assume rather average mentalization skills of coaching clients that can, however, be impaired in stressful situations and due to individual vulnerabilities. On the one hand, these breakdowns in the habitual mentalizing abilities can be expected especially when external stress occurs, e.g., conflicts in the supervisor-subordinate dyad or during periods of restructuring. On the other hand, mentalizing impairments can also arise from particular, individual vulnerabilities, such as the rapid reaching of the switch point when particular motivational life themes are triggered.

Therefore, in contrast to MBT in the clinical context, coaching aims less to support general mentalization ability, but rather to strengthen the ability to mentalize in stressful situations, thus shifting the switchpoint, and to enable the clients to gain a deeper understanding of situationally or individually triggered mentalization impairments, i.e., regressions to prementalizing modes in oneself and coworkers.

Fundamentals of Mentalization-Based Treatment (MBT)

MBT combines a therapeutic stance and techniques that can help to restore mentalizing abilities and strengthen mentalization in general (Taubner & Sevecke, 2015). Therefore, the MBT therapist pays attention to mentalization impairments during the therapeutic conversation. At such a point in the conversation, the MBT therapist stops the flow of the conversation and tries to explore together with the patient at which point in the narrative or interaction mentalization failed. This technique is called *stop, rewind, and explore*.

In general, the stance of the MBT therapist is characterized by a *fundamental curiosity* about the mental state of the patient as well as an authentic warm contact. Both are based on a *not-knowing and inquisitive stance*, which conveys to the patient that the therapist is not the expert who can explain to the patient what they think and feel and what unconscious motives drive them.

MBT also encompasses supportive techniques, especially putting oneself into the patient's shoes and acknowledging their emotional experience which is called *validation.* Therefore, feelings are not questioned or criticized, but on the contrary, they are empathically acknowledged.

What can be elaborated on and altered together, is the explanation for one's own feelings, for the feelings of others, and for what generally underlies human behavior. This can be achieved through the techniques of *clarification* and *exploration*. In this context, the therapists can also carefully suggest their own assumptions, such as *If I were you, I would have felt rejected, but I do not know if you felt that way*.

At the same time, the therapists acknowledge that they too have an emotional impact on the patient and can sometimes become a source of anger or other negative emotions. In these cases, it can be helpful to reflect together on the difficulties in the relationship between patient and therapist, such as expectations that were disappointed. Addressing these difficulties offers the chance to develop a mentalizing understanding *within* an emotional relationship, since the shared relationship is discussed directly. This intervention is called *mentalizing the relationship*.

Mentalization in Coaching

In our view, MBT is helpful for coaching practice in at least three ways. Firstly, the basic principles described above can provide guidance for coaching on which interventions are conducive to fostering the ability to mentalize. Secondly, the mentalization concept can serve to navigate the coaching process by using breakdowns in mentalization as an indication of emotionally significant situations and topics for both the coach and the client. Thirdly, explaining the concept of mentalization in terms of a psychoeducative approach can be used to help clients, especially managers, understand when their own ability to mentalize or that of colleagues and employees may be impaired.

In the following, we use the case study described at the beginning of this chapter to illustrate interventions that are adapted to the client's ability to mentalize.

When coaching clients are in *teleological mode*, the goal of interventions is to overcome the clinging to immediate behavioral solutions and to enable a deeper understanding of the conflict. In interacting with a person in teleological mode, one feels under pressure to act because of the strong pressure that something must happen immediately. The danger for the coach, therefore, lies in becoming involved at the action level and being tempted, for example, to overrun the time contracted for the coaching session or to make phone calls for the client. Taking a stance that is conducive to fostering mentalization, the coach should first acknowledge the

importance of their desire to act, but without acting upon it. In concrete terms, this could mean reporting back to the client: *I can understand very well that you demand an apology from your supervisor. But before you take any ill-considered steps, let us use the time here together and consider how the situation can be understood.* Only when Jane has calmed down through the validation of the coach, can it be further explored why the apology is so important to her and whether the behavior of her supervisor, the general manager, could be understood differently.

If coaching clients react in *psychic equivalence mode*, the goal of interventions is to support clients in being able to allow alternative perspectives, i.e., to question the certainty of the one (own) truth. Statements in the psychic equivalence mode often provoke reactions in the interaction partner (including the coach) to try to convince the person in the psychic equivalence mode of alternative perspectives. Another typical reaction is that the narrow-minded interpretations in the psychic equivalence mode trigger negative emotional reactions and the impulse arises in the coach that the client get a grip of themselves. From the point of view of MBT, it is considered reasonable to first accept and validate the experience of the client (*This sounds really terrible.*) before exploring in more depth how exactly this interpretation is arrived at. Then one can mentally *rewind*: *At what point did it become difficult for you to understand the perspective of the others? Maybe we can go back there together and take a closer look at the situation?* Only then could it be possible for Jane to recognize that she projects her own fears on the general manager.

If a client operates in *pretend mode,* there is a risk that the coach will confirm the pseudo-mentalizing language by *going along* with the cognitively colored reflections or by turning away from the client inwardly in a bored state, because the descriptions feel unreal and emotionally empty. A reaction that would not be conducive to mentalization would be to let go with the hope that something meaningful will happen in the extensive narrations after all. The goal of an intervention that fosters mentalization would therefore be to break through the pseudo-mentalization and to challenge mentalization anew. Humor or paradoxical interventions can be used, such as *It is a small miracle you were not fired along with your employee.* A challenge in this sense is the interruption of the pretend mode and the attempt to bring inner and outer reality back into contact. The coach, therefore, tries to reconnect what is said and what is felt and to explain that interpretations that are detached from one's own inner experience are of no help.

Conclusion

In this chapter, the concept of mentalization was introduced and applied to coaching. The mentalization concept and recommendations for fostering mentalization also appear to be helpful and applicable for coaching. So far it appears that only initial steps have been made to adopt Mentalization-Based Treatment (MBT) principles in coaching. The present chapter, therefore, seeks to act as an impulse for considering

mentalization in the future in work-related practice (namely coaching and consulting), and research.

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Metaphors of "Organization" and Their Meaning in Coaching

Wolfgang Scholl and Frank Schmelzer

Introduction

Metaphors and Their Use

Instead of a literal description of an object of scrutiny, a metaphor denotes something similar but in a more vivid and holistic way, with more appropriate associations, hitting the root of the matter. Speaking of *top management* instead of the board of directors, for example, illustrates the special, *superior* meaning, and shows at the same time the difficulty of "*getting up there*," with a free association of *climbing to the mountain top*, what only very few can manage. Metaphors particularly clarify the connotative or emotional meaning for the recipients, especially in their physical sensations (see chapter "Embodiment and Its Importance for Coaching"); in the last expression, for example, one can sense the possibility of *exhaustion* before getting to the top. Metaphors can also replace content-related descriptions that are so filled with details that you might *not be able to see the forest for the trees*. And vice versa, it may be that the variety of content of an object is so confusing and *beyond grasp* that metaphors serve as a simplified scheme of order. On the other hand, each metaphor has its limits and may be misleading through inappropriate associations. On the mountain top, you have a free view around and the main work is done if you are there, but not so on the organization's top. In *Images of Organization* (1997), Morgan used such metaphors to characterize the different ways in which scientists

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have tried—sometimes unconsciously—to *come to grips* with the complex issue of organization.

A good knowledge of these metaphors is useful not only for scientists but also for coaching, because clients are often unconsciously guided by a metaphor when describing their problems and may not recognize their one-sidedness and limits. An expansion of their reflections can then be achieved by stimulating other metaphors, which lead to new possibilities for thought and action. While the use of metaphors is in many cases a proven method in coaching, it is particularly worthwhile in the case of organizations because many different and at the same time one-sided views have been produced for them.

Detailed Case Study

Mohammed, a manager for organizational development and controlling, who belongs to the upper management of a large company, sought coaching for his role balance and his appearance in the management. He felt that he was not taken seriously enough in the organization and therefore not effective enough. This annoyed him very much as a person, but also as in his role which he fulfilled with great passion. He had a strong sense of responsibility for the company and felt that poor quality could quickly undermine its reputation. He was practically the quality guard of his company.

The coaching initially focused on the processes in management meetings. He described how he was able to prove to his colleagues what serious deficiencies were occurring in production and how often he had saved the production manager's chair. The head of production in turn tried to excuse everything, did not take any real responsibility, and was even covered by the CEO. The OD manager now wondered how he could use even more drastic forms of communications to attract more attention to what he considered to be a sloppy production area and also to get the CEO on his side.

The coach asked the client to put himself in the position of the production manager and the CEO by changing perspectives. He hesitantly got involved and realized how difficult it is to put oneself in the perspective of others in such a charged atmosphere. In his opinion, the production manager is not a logical thinker but rather acts spontaneously and from the gut. He does not think in terms of goals and criteria and plans farsightedly ahead. He works reactively like a fireman and runs from fire to fire instead of putting his intelligence into prevention. Besides, he would always be at the production manager's side with good ideas and if he took them to heart, not so many fires would break out.

After further enquiries, the client admitted that the head of production does not have an easy life either, as the company often takes on large and risky orders and the R&D department with its innovative materials does not think enough about mass production. There was a lot to try out, test, and improvise in production.

At this point, the metaphors of organization (see below) came to the coach's mind. While the client chose a typical person's view to explain the situation, he himself as the *logical and far-sighted* thinker versus the production manager as a *muddling-through* and *gut man*, the perspective of the organizational metaphors provided a different picture. The coach explained that, depending on the professional group and function in the organization, those in charge often use different perspectives or metaphors to explain reality to each other and can thereby easily get into conflict with each other.

The coach suspected that the client sees the organization more as a rational and plannable entity, like a *machine*. This has certain implications. According to the machine metaphor, the functional mode of the organization can be precisely planned and is therefore predictable for those responsible (if they are only smart enough). The task now is to get the machine up to speed, to maintain, and to lubricate it. If errors should occur, they can be quickly and safely remedied. All processes based on the division of labor are clear to the people in charge and therefore everyone knows what needs to be done. The unity of structure and processes is given. The organization is a pure engineering art.

The head of production and his actions were more suited to the *problem-solving* metaphor. Since the circumstances in his field changed often and quickly and unpredictable things happened, he was more in the mode of improvisation, i.e., of continuous, evaluative learning and rapid prototyping. Due to the uniqueness of the company's orders and products, production was often pure pioneering work of research and tinkering, trial and error, and rejection. There is little certainty here, little can be planned and defined. A high degree of flexibility and tolerance of ambiguity is necessary in view of the limited rationality in the coverage of such situations.

For the CEO, the *self-organization* metaphor seemed to fit with a survival-oriented balance between stability and flexibility (Competing Values Model, Quinn & Rohrbaugh, 1983). The company needs stability to guarantee product safety to customers. Equally important is flexibility, as this allows specific and unique solutions to be created for the market. According to the metaphor of self-organization, evolutionary generated communication patterns (Luhmann, 2018) or attractors (Kriz, 2016; chapter "System Theories as a Basis in Coaching") stabilize behavior in organizations. These patterns are shaped by structures and routines (machine metaphor) as well as by corporate culture. According to Luhmann, corporate culture is a non-decidable decision-making premise. It has a strong influence on the actions of the actors, but cannot itself be influenced directly, causally, or manipulatively (despite the many attempts in mission statement processes). Those in charge of large organizations, therefore, need good observation skills and a balancing course of action so that the culture of their organization is not too strongly dominated by the logic of individual units. In the light of this metaphor, the CEO organized a sophisticated game at peer level with a great deal of understanding for both conflict partners, because he was aware of the needs of the production manager and at the same time of a strong corrective focus on learning and quality control.

The work with these metaphors greatly relieved the client, because they presented coherent images and made appreciation for the actions of all participants possible. Their operations became better understandable in the light of professional and institutional patterns.

However, the client was not yet completely satisfied. He wanted to have more influence on the process. To strengthen his humility before his Herculean task, the metaphor of self-organization was used to explore structural determinacy and dynamic stability, thus gaining a better understanding and acceptance of the limited possibilities of influence.

But since even a coach does not want to miss a punch line, the coach reached into a completely different box of metaphors. He explained to the client the wisdom of his organization by means of the Catholic canonization procedure. Since the Catholic Church wants to prevent people from being canonized too lightly, an argumentative dispute is arranged between the Advocatus angeli and the Advocatus diavoli, where the latter is always filled with the most respected scholar. That role fits the client quite well, doesn't it? Even if he cannot often assert himself, the company needs this critical and evocative function. This is often difficult for the person in question to bear, as they want to be effective and popular. Even though this is difficult for the Advocatus diavoli, these persons are smart and useful.

Organizational Metaphors

Scientific concepts—like all our concepts—are human constructions that reflect the selective knowledge, pre-judgments (prejudices?), and interests of their authors, of their generation, and of their scientific discipline. Since organizations affect different groups with their specific interests in different ways, different basic assumptions are also represented in prevalent theories, which suggest different practical demands. This one-sidedness should become clear for the organizational metaphors presented here. The following remarks are based on Morgan (1997) and Scholl (2007), whereby many things have to be shortened and sometimes other emphases are set. The metaphors are presented in their approximate historical genesis.

The Exploitation Metaphor

In the age of industrialization, child labor, inhumane working conditions, starvation wages, existence loss of craftsmen, etc., have produced exploitation as an integrating metaphor for the prevailing conditions. Marx and Engels put it pointedly like this:

> Modern Industry has converted the little workshop of the patriarchal master into the great factory of the industrial capitalist. Masses of labourers, crowded into the factory, are organised like soldiers. As privates of the industrial army they are placed under the command of a perfect hierarchy of officers and sergeants. Not only are they slaves of the

bourgeois class, and of the bourgeois State; they are daily and hourly enslaved by the machine, by the overlooker, and, above all, by the individual bourgeois manufacturer himself. The more openly this despotism proclaims gain to be its end and aim, the more petty, the more hateful, and the more embittering it is. (...) No sooner is the exploitation of the labourer by the manufacturer, so far, at an end, that he receives his wages in cash, than he is set upon by the other portions of the bourgeoisie, the landlord, the shopkeeper, the pawnbroker, etc. (Marx and Engels 1848/2010, p. 18).

Accidents at work, occupational diseases, and unemployment still play a significant role today, and the working conditions in underdeveloped countries still resemble those conditions described by Marx and Engels. Furthermore, dangerous products for people and the environment are a regular problem and the very unequal distribution of income promotes the increasing concentration of capital and power. On the other hand, organizations have meanwhile made a significant contribution to an enormous growth of knowledge, new possibilities for action, and extended life expectancies. Many a former problem has been significantly alleviated under the pressure of the labor movement, especially in social and democratic countries, driven by this metaphor.

The Machine Metaphor

The idea that the perfect organization is a machine became popular due to the increasing mechanization of production with its superiority over manual labor. This development was perfected by the so-called *Scientific Management* of Taylor (1911), now better known as *Taylorism*. With the principal idea of separating manual and mental work, the manual workers were degraded to calculable cogwheels in the gears, the use of which was optimized by the factory engineers with the help of time and motion studies. This is particularly noticeable in continuous production and piecework, where the workers become appendages of the machine. This *machine* was organized in a strictly hierarchical manner according to the military model, especially in the large organizations that emerged in the nineteenth century. Often higher-ranked officers from the military were assigned to leading positions (*chief officers*). Weber (1972) characterized the ideal type of such an organization as a *steely housing* and formulated the metaphor in this way:

A fully developed bureaucratic mechanism behaves (sc. compared to other forms of organization) ... like a machine to the non-mechanical ways of producing goods. (p. 56). "The purely bureaucratic ... administration is, according to all experience, the most formally *rational* form of governance in terms of precision, consistency, discipline, tautness, and reliability, i.e. predictability for the CEO ... able to be *technically* perfected to the highest degree of performance ... *formally the most rational* form of ruling (Weber, 1972, p. 128, own translation).

Later empirical research showed that organizations hardly did function like Weber's ideal type, but it nevertheless remained an ideal type for many practitioners (Huys et al., 1999). After the second world war and the enormous economic growth

in Western societies, these first two metaphors have been combined in the so-called *Labor-Process-Debate* (Braverman, 1974; Hildebrandt & Seltz, 1987). Workers are expropriated of their human capital through the time-and-motion studies, where engineers first learn from the most capable workers how to do the job best. Then, this optimal process is split into pieces which are prescribed to the workers demanding only a minimum of learning and enabling minimum wages.

The Needs Metaphor

The conditions of exploitation and the meaningless degradation to pure henchmen complemented each other very effectively in theory and practice, but also provoked multiple criticism and massive protest actions on the part of those affected and their unions. The *human relations movement* emphasized the importance of the needs beyond wages for subsistence, namely those for social contact, social recognition, and self-development, following Maslow's hierarchy of needs (1954). Considering all these needs should be in the mutual interest of the employees and the company and its productivity (e.g., McGregor, 1967; Pfeffer, 1998). This focus on the needs of working people has directly and indirectly probably triggered the largest part of psychological organizational research, especially in the areas of work motivation and job satisfaction, group dynamics and leadership, cooperation, and participation (e.g., Coch and French 1947/48). With job enlargement, job enrichment, and semi-autonomous groups, alternatives for the design of work in organizations were shown. In empirical research, these approaches have proven relatively successful (Schuster, 1986). However, they are based on a certain ideal of harmony, which often does not do justice to the circumstances (Pfeffer, 1996).

The Problem-Solving Metaphor

Organizations are constantly faced with problems. Objectives must be formed, specified, or modified to allow a reasonably uniform disposition of organizational resources, and ways must be found to achieve these objectives. Activity in organizations can thus be seen as a stream of learning, problem-solving, and decision-making activities, which are approached through the division of labor. While individuals have only limited knowledge and skills, a clever division of labor can be used to tailor the tasks so that competent agents can be found for each subtask. But even there, they are subject to quantitative and qualitative limitations of information processing, have difficulty in dealing with differing opinions, and usually prefer what strengthens their self-esteem. The coordination of the division of labor takes place mainly through rules, plans, and programs, that incorporate the accumulated experience of organizations and can be adapted gradually to new environmental conditions despite "limited rationality"—although sometimes too late. The

guiding idea of these considerations is adaptive problem-solving (March & Simon, 1958), which sometimes resembles more a muddling through (Lindblom, 1959). This approach has proven itself to be successful, especially for mastering innovations (Scholl, 2004).

The Organism Metaphor

The founders of the journal *Human Relations*, the Center of Group Dynamics in Michigan, and the Tavistock Institute in London, supplemented the individually focused work within the framework of the needs metaphor by systems-theoretical considerations inspired by concepts and research in biology (Emery, 1981). Katz and Kahn (1978) showed with the help of role theory how individual actions are connected organizationally and how organizational structures develop from event cycles into organizational subsystems. Gradually, more attention was paid to the interconnections and repercussions of activities, leading to system dynamics with their often circular processes: Counteracting effects or negative feedback cycles can stabilize a system, while self-reinforcing processes (positive feedback) sooner or later enforce changes, which may lead to a new steady-state, forming a special organizational culture. These considerations and examples were increasingly used for counseling work (see Likert, 1961; Schein, 1985; Senge, 1996; Scharmer, 2007). Insights of the problem-solving and the organism metaphor were combined in systemic population ecology approaches: Empirical evidence of the limitations of organizational rationality has been provided by time series of growth and decline of organizational types (e.g., grocery stores, law firms). It has been shown that change occurs often not through conscious adaptation to changing conditions but through external winnowing, whereby entire populations of organizations can become extinct (Amburgey & Rao, 1996).

The Politics Metaphor

It would be naive to assume that all members of the organization have the same interests or, when joining the organization, renounce their own interests in favor of an imaginary overall interest. Conflicts of interest can occur anywhere within the organization, vertically and horizontally, but also with external partners and stakeholders. The way in which conflicts are dealt with is similar to that of state politics, but more covert, less well visible. Therefore, it became referred to as *micropolitics* (Burns, 1961; Pfeffer, 1981). The conflicts take place more in the background and often remain latent, but nevertheless have an impact. Many studies have shown how personal goals and group interests influence important decisions (policies), which tactics and means of power are used (politics) and to what extent this has (dys)-functional consequences for the organization. So, conflict management is necessary,

and *collaborating* was shown to be most productive (Pruitt & Kim, 2004; Scholl, 2019), while *avoiding* is as unproductive as *acommodating* or *competing*, i.e., the unilateral assertion of own interests through restrictive control (chapter "Power and Micropolitics as a Topic in Coaching"). Further parallels to *big politics* can be seen in the fact that every organization has a constitution and an election mechanism for the ruling elite. The political metaphor is an important addition to and correction of the needs and the problem-solving metaphors. A combination of adaptive problem-solving with collaborative micropolitics has turned out to be the most effective process for innovations (Scholl, 2004).

The Cost Metaphor

In principle, there is a choice of carrying out economic transactions in markets or in organizations. A manufacturer can, for example, purchase all parts from other companies and limit itself to assembly as its own original service, or it can produce any number of parts itself. In all other areas, too, such as research, personnel development, or accounting, the services can be provided in-house or can be outsourced. According to Williamson (1975), that alternative is chosen which has lower transaction costs, i.e., the additional costs of the combinatorial process associated with the initiation, agreement, control, and modification of contracts, i.e., the costs of organizing the division of labor. Historically, organizations have grown more and more because they tried to bring many imponderables under their control. However, growing size has led to a lack of transparency, with the result that organizations are increasingly subdivided into more independent units. Moreover, they increasingly outsource some special tasks to other organizations with more suitable core competencies. The cost metaphor shows organizational design logics, but also refers to the pressure of globalized labor, consumer, and financial markets.

The Self-Organization Metaphor

The combination of systems thinking with the insight into the limited rationality of human beings made it clear that systems thinking as in the organism metaphor is not sufficient to grasp the real complexities, since the descriptive variables used do not provide a secure access to reality. In order to correspond to this, biochemical findings on self-organization, concisely summarized as "order out of chaos" (Jantsch, 1980) were applied to organizations. These ideas gained popularity, e.g., by extending the autopoiesis concept (Luhmann, 2018), or by extending Laser physics into synergetics (Haken, 2006). While Luhmann's approach did not directly produce empirical research with persons and organizations, Synergetics did this beyond physics, especially with persons (Haken & Schiepek, 2010; Kriz, 2016; chapter "System Theories as a Basis in Coaching"). The idea of self-organization is a warning against

simplistic systems theory, but it gives few clues as to how it can be combined with the diverse empirical findings of organizational science. The self-organization idea could perhaps be applied and elaborated in a more theoretically and empirically differentiated way on the basis of symbolic interactionism (Berger & Luckmann, 1966), especially as formalized in the nonlinear dynamics of language use by Affect Control Theory (Heise, 2007; MacKinnon & Heise, 2010; chapter "Communication as a Method and as a Topic in Coaching"). Here, systemic mechanisms of social construction are examined in their interactions.

The Network Metaphor

Electronic networking via the Internet and World Wide Web has provided a new metaphor for describing organizational networks and is seen as a rising trend of the new millennium. These include flexibly networked groups as an organizational principle instead of hierarchical control (Miles & Snow, 1995), more direct networking between organizational units instead of hierarchical permission, and increasing external networking up to the point of a *borderless enterprise* (Picot et al., 1998), inter-organizational networks, and *virtual organizations* consisting of legally independent persons or organizations (Sydow, 1999). In doing so, the various electronic possibilities help to considerably increase the number, frequency, and range of the necessary communications for organizing processes. In flexible networks, rapidly changing problem situations can be tackled better; they can generate more and better knowledge for problem-solving in order to make well-founded decisions and to implement them accordingly. The network metaphor directs the focus from the organization to the process of organizing (Weick, 1985); it can be easily combined with the problem-solving metaphor. The increasing digitalization of many processes is interpreted as a third industrial revolution, which will gain momentum in the coming years. From Amazon to Zalando, electronic business is accompanied by an increasing data collection, data mining, artificial intelligence algorithms, and finally monopolization, leading to increasing dependence of suppliers on the one side and the "transparent consumer" on the other (Zuboff, 2019). Further fears concern more precarious work and mass unemployment through the increasing digitalization of almost all processes. The irony of these developments could be a reinvigoration of the exploitation metaphor.

Strengths and Weaknesses of the Different Metaphors

Organizational metaphors create and clarify connections between many different individual aspects and give them a comprehensible meaning. However, they can only capture a part of the phenomena and make them plausible. It is therefore important to recognize their respective one-sidedness and, where necessary, to

Table 1 Plausibilities of the organizational metaphors

Metaphor	Strengths	Weaknesses	Amendment/Correction
Exploitation	View on inhumane economic and social conditions	Monocausal explanation, gradual change futile	A: Needs, A/C: Politics, A/C: Global self-organization, C: Networks
Machine	Thinking in terms of division of labor, order, optimization, and control: performance	Motivation shortened, workers' abilities underestimated, those of management overestimated	C: Exploitation, A/C: Needs, C: Problem-solving, C: Self-organization, C: Networks
Needs	Diversity of human motivation, new work structuring opportunities	Focus on the individual employees, harmonious picture	C: Exploitation, A: Organism, A: Problem-solving, C: Politics, C: Costs, A: Networks
Problem-solving	Focus on knowledge and decision-making, limited rationality	Politics and exploitation underestimated, simple organizational picture	C: Exploitation, C: Politics, A: Self-organization, C: Costs, A: Networks
Organism	Connection between person and organization; first change dynamics	Indeterminate, simplified, harmonization of hard problems	C: Exploitation, C: Problem-solving, C: Politics, A: Self-organization
Politics	Focus on conflicts of opinion and interests, org. constitution recognized	Conflict-free processes and global influences underexposed	A: Exploitation, A: Problem-solving, A: Costs, C: Self-organization, C: Networks
Costs	Choices between organization and market economy recognized	Limited focus on corporations, ignorance of politics and power	C: Exploitation, C: Needs, C: Politics, A: Problem-solving, C: Self-organization
Self-organization	Emphasis on real complexity, attempt of pattern recognition	Too abstract, hardly any empirical research, complexity as an excuse	C: Exploitation, A: Needs, C: Politics, C: Problem-solving, C: Costs, A/C: Networks
Networks	Flexibility of organizing, potential inclusion of increasing digitalization	Limited focus, ambivalent need orientation, power, and politics missing	C: Exploitation, A: Problem-solving, A: Politics, A/C: Costs, C: Self-organization

compensate for it with other metaphors (cf. the introductory example). Table 1 attempts to summarize the strengths and weaknesses of each metaphor and to show up possible amendments and corrections with other metaphors in a keyword-like manner in order to stimulate reflection.

As the list of amendments and corrections in the rightmost column of Table 1 shows, all metaphors need additional perspectives from several other metaphors in order to gain a fuller understanding of organizational processes.

Experience with Metaphors

Working with organizational metaphors as well as with metaphors, in general, provides clients with vivid inner images, as they have a narrative structure in addition to the logical one. This enables connections and changes of perspective in a narrative mode. In addition to easing perspective changes, the clients receive a sense of meaning that legitimizes them as well as the other relevant actors without playing down opposites. Organizational metaphors are therefore an effective method for depicting complex facts and inscrutable patterns and thus enable new options for action. Sometimes it is enough to reassess a situation, even if you must make an alliance with the devil ☺.

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Micropolitics, Gender, and Emotional Labor in Coaching

Christiane Jüngling and Daniela Rastetter

In our contribution, we first design an organization-theoretical perspective on gender, emotional labor, and organizational politics. Then we present the competence model of our gender-sensitive organizational politics coaching, which can help women in promotion and leadership positions to identify expectation dilemmas and develop their own strategies for action. Finally, we reflect on gender-specific display rules in interactions and discuss options for micropolitical emotion management.

Three Case Studies

During coaching, Mary, a junior manager reports that the relationship with her direct superior had deteriorated massively. The supervisor was originally a colleague of equal rank, with whom she had a very relaxed relationship. They also occasionally went out for a beer after work. She certainly had also flirted with him from time to time. Through the special relationship with him, she had hoped for good career opportunities when he rose to become her superior. Since then, however, he would behave particularly distant toward her. He would expect excellent professional performances from her and would criticize her for small mistakes in front of the whole team. She felt pressured a lot. She almost had the impression that the newly

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promoted colleague wanted to use her as an example to prove that he could be tough on the team.

In her first management position, Jane, a team leader, behaves in a competent and fair manner. Although she is popular with her team, her supervisor does not suggest any next career steps. The older employees call on her to keep her position and not to move to the next higher career level as quickly as her (male) predecessors who are only interested in their own advancement. An older mentor warns her that she could become so popular and irreplaceable as a team leader that her department head would no longer be interested in "giving her back."

As the only woman in her team, Dawn, a 35-year-old computer scientist, has long tried to adapt to the "male culture" and spent many hours working overtime and long evenings with colleagues at the bar. While these activities have contributed to professional networking and further career steps among colleagues, she is at a standstill. She has not been offered any options for advancement and despite all her efforts, she feels like an outsider. She is particularly disappointed that her former boss, with whom she had a very good relationship, now speaks dismissively of her. She has the impression that she is only accepted in her department as a "good, hardworking girl." If she herself were to express ambitions for promotion, she believes she would be "out of favor." Therefore, in her own estimation, she now behaves distrustfully and covertly reproachful. She is aware that this will further worsen her career chances.

Gender, Organization, and Emotion: The Example of the Leadership Stereotype

The gender blindness of organizational research has been criticized in gender studies since the 1990s. Acker (1992) developed the theoretical concept of "gendered organization," which assumes that all structures, processes, and symbols in organizations are interwoven with the dimension of gender. Systematic separations between the work areas of men and women are represented by rules of conduct, symbols, and images. The interactions between the sexes (re)produce gender-related social structures in organizations, since they are based on gender-specific ideas, evaluations, and attitudes (Britton, 2000). The approach of the social construction of gender roles and unequal gender relations is—in the sense of "doing gender"—the basis of our contribution (see chapter "Gender Theoretical Impulses for Theory and Practice of Coaching"). Social categories are basically subject to stereotyping processes that reduce complexity. Social psychological approaches point out that gender-specific structures always prevail, particularly in situations with little institutional pre-structuring, since people tend to resort to familiar gender stereotypical patterns of action in interactions (Ridgeway, 2001). Familiar gender boundaries thus reproduce themselves also under conditions of social change and even flow into organizational structures of young companies and alternative organizations.

Schröder et al. (2013) show that there are intercultural differences in gender stereotyping. Gender stereotypes seem to be particularly pronounced in Germany.

At management level, it is particularly the male manager stereotype that represents and reproduces gendered structures, processes, and symbols in a multilayered way. The manager stereotype means that managers are associated with stereotypically male rather than stereotypically female characteristics, both by men and by women. The "Think-manager-think-male" and "Think-follower-think-female" phenomenon is very stable, despite the appreciation of so-called "soft skills" as leadership competencies, i.e., socio-emotional abilities such as collegiality and empathy stereotypically attributed to women (Schein, 2007; Rudman & Phelan, 2008).

Gender stereotypes refer, among other things, to the archetypal dualism of femininity = emotionality and masculinity = rationality, a very constant polarization (see Penz & Sauer, 2016). Emotional evaluations of men and women are part of "doing gender." "Both men and women managers control their emotions when managing emotional space-time, but women also control their gender. Being female requires a specific attention to gender codes and social expectations" (Symons, 2007, p. 105).

Within the manager stereotype, gender stereotypes are linked with organizational requirements for rationality and emotion regulation. It is true that purely rational bureaucratic organization has long been regarded as a myth or façade of legitimacy in organizational research (e.g., Fineman, 2008). Nevertheless, organizations as institutions of publicity, productivity, order, and goal orientation represent a space that is more strongly associated with rationality than with emotionality. Although emotions are considered important influencing variables, they are not seen in the form of spontaneous and uncontrolled affects, but as regulated emotions, i.e., consciously used emotions to achieve certain goals, for example, to increase the commitment or motivation of employees. Since the 1990s, good leadership has included the ability to motivate and involve as well as coaching and mentoring (Symons, 2007). Feelings are no longer seen as a disruptive factor, but as a resource that can be used profitably. However, male and female managers interpret them differently. The unemotional leader is no longer desired, but they should have their feelings under control. This is a question of who may display which feelings, when, and how. Our thesis is that different rules apply to men and women, and that these rules can only be complied with or changed by powerful, political action.

Power and Organizational Politics

Kanter's credo in 1977 was: "What looks like sex differences may really be power differences" (1977, p. 9). This quote addresses the relationship between gender and unequal power relations, which is set out in the theory of "gendered organization." We understand organizations as political systems with partly competing, partly allying individuals, interest groups, or organizational units ("organizational politics"). This analytical perspective is the basis for our understanding of power and

politics (see chapter "Power and Micropolitics as a Topic in Coaching"). A supposedly objective factual problem is thus structured and shaped by various subjective views of the problem and interests. Conflicts of objectives and interests are a normal part of everyday life in organizations. Compromises must be found for diverging interests, which are negotiated openly or covertly (cf. inter alia Pfeffer, 1981; Neuberger, 1995; Ferris & Treadway, 2012). Decisions are therefore at best socially rational, i.e., always the outcome of these mixed interests. This is where the dimension of power comes into play.

Power in organizations is linked to resources on which others are dependent. The actual power of a member of an organization does not only correspond to the formal hierarchy; the exercise of power is also possible in subordinate positions. This understanding of power corresponds to the well-known definition of Max Weber (1972, p. 28, own translation): "Power is the opportunity to impose your will within a social context, even when opposed and regardless of the integrity of that chance." Power "...as opportunity" implies that power is not a property of an individual, a group, or an organization. Power is the assertion of "one's own will" in social relationships against, but also without resistance. According to Weber, all conceivable human and structural constellations can enable a person to exercise power.

The term micropolitics is based on an essay by the sociologist *Tom R. Burns* from 1961, who early on highlighted the great relevance of internal negotiation processes in organizations, especially the importance of informal power struggles and agreements. Basic assumptions of organizational politics are:

- The formal hierarchy does not guarantee the implementation of leadership goals.
- There are various means of power that are used to enforce different interests.
- The informal use of these micropolitical means of power occurs primarily in areas that are not clearly defined, so-called "zones of uncertainty."
- Emotionality is also a field for organizational politics.

In principle, there is an infinite number of political possibilities for action. The most common influence tactics for micropolitics are the following (Solga & Blickle, 2018, p. 136; Rastetter & Jüngling, 2018, p. 46):

- Assertiveness and Pressure Tactics
- Blocking
- Sanctions
- Legitimation
- Exchange tactics
- Ingratiation tactics
- Rationality
- Coalitions
- Upward appeals
- Inspirational and personal appeals
- Consultation tactics
- Self-promotion

In general, "soft" cooperative tactics are used much more often than "hard" tactics, but this does not mean that there is no power in play when it comes to soft tactics. In our view, the effect of a power tactic results from a complex political constellation of actions. This is also demonstrated by communication. In all inter-actions—whether on the same level or between different hierarchical levels—even small acts of communication can express appreciation or degradation. Such com-munication patterns play an important role in the positioning of men and women. Edding and Clausen (2014, p. 14) describe various forms of micro-degradations or micro-appreciations. Micro-degradations are for example:

- You do not look at a person or turn away during a conversation.
- You check your e-mails although you are having a conversation with a person.
- You make sexist jokes or laugh along.
- You praise someone for an idea you just ignored with another person.

Micro-appreciations are, for example:

- You maintain friendly eye contact.
- You listen intently and ask questions when something is unclear.
- You ask another person for their opinion.
- You relate positively to another person's contribution.

In the German-speaking world, Oswald Neuberger and Gerhard Blickle have had a decisive influence on the theory and empiricism of organizational politics research. Neuberger (2011, p. 33, own translation) vividly describes how diverse and ambiv-alent micropolitical action can be: "A political actor must possess a wide range of sometimes conflicting skills: they will be sincere, helpful, friendly (. . .) with friends; (. . .) cautious, reserved, unpredictable, cunning (or deceitful) or even aggressive with competitors; respected, loved, feared with subordinates; with those he is courting he will make an impression, promote himself, build trust; with neutrals he will be vigilant, not ruining things with anyone."

What Does Micropolitical Competence Mean?

Numerous quantitative and qualitative studies confirm that political action and political skills are necessary and constructive in uncertain operational arenas and promote organizational development and career advancement (Wihler & Blickle, 2019; Rastetter & Jüngling, 2018; Ferris et al., 2010).

The more political skills someone has, it is assumed, the easier it is for them to grasp the social context correctly and adapt their behavior accordingly (Ferris & Treadway, 2012, p. 12). The Political Skill Inventory (PSI) is intended to record micropolitical competence as a competence for regulating action. In this context, micropolitical competence refers to the ability and willingness to empathize with other people and to control one's own behavior in relationship networks flexibly and in a manner appropriate to the situation in such a way that it appears sincere and

trustworthy and influences the behavior of other people in accordance with one's own goals (Solga & Blickle, 2018, p. 138).

We understand *micropolitical competence* as strategically prudent action. This means looking at professional events from a political perspective, determining a suitable agenda, understanding the respective field of force, and identifying important actors (fellow players). On this basis, it is then a matter of selecting the personally appropriate strategies and using them in the right place in relation to the right people. Micropolitical competence includes everything that, beyond their professional qualifications, enables members of an organization to act successfully in their own sense. These can also be collective or political goals, e.g., when works or staff councils want to assert their positions in committees more successfully. We therefore explicitly understand political competence not as egoistic, cunning (or deceitful) use of tactics—as is the negative stereotype of a manipulative, unscrupulous politician—but *as a strategic attitude and a learnable, positively effective competence to act.*

The Micropolitical Competence Model

Following established competence models, we have developed a model for systematizing micropolitical competence that consists of the four components professional competence, activity competence, social-communicative competence, and self-competence (see Fig. 1).

Self-competence
Self-reflection, integration of micropolitical action into the self-concept

Professional competence
Knowledge about power and micropolitics, corporate culture, organization and gender

MCM

Activity competence
Initiative for action, conscious use of micropolitical tactics

Social-communicative competence
Empathy, selection and application of suitable strategies, networking, strategic self-representation

Fig. 1 Micropolitical competence model (MCM), own representation

Self-Competence: What Am I Willing to Do?

Self-competence includes good self- and external perception, self-reflection, self-regulation, gender and role distance and flexibility, clarity about one's own values and goals, and last but not least a positive attitude toward micropolitics. In our opinion, the extent to which political action can be reconciled with personal ideas about one's own behavior is a central question for women, because orientation toward success and advancement as well as gaining power is not part of the female role model and must therefore be consciously brought into congruence with one's own self-image. Self-competence also includes clarity about what actions an advancement-oriented person—whether woman or man—is prepared to take and whether they can and want to use different roles flexibly. Professional coaching can contribute to this.

Professional Competence: What Do I Need to Know About Micropolitics?

Micropolitical expertise is a technical and methodological competence. It includes the ability to recognize political constellations, to analyze them strategically, and to translate them into methodological instruments and tactics. It also includes knowledge of the respective corporate culture, organizational rules, power, and gender. Women's good degrees and the successes they experience in training and studies often lead them to overestimate the influence of their professional knowledge on their careers and underestimate the relevance of organizational politics—for example, the impact of gender stereotypes. It is therefore important to look at organizational developments through the "micropolitical lens."

Activity Competence: What Exactly Can I Do?

Micropolitical activity competence describes the ability of individuals to act on their own initiative and effectively in a political context. Activity competence is based on the conviction of self-efficacy, initiative, willpower, and the decision to take specific action. Ultimately, this competence is only acquired by trying out and experimenting with micropolitical actions and gathering experience in and after such actions. Corresponding competences can be promoted through mentoring, training, and coaching.

Social-Communicative Competence: Which Specific situation, Which Rules and Norms, Which Interaction Partners Am I Dealing with?

Social competence is the ability to act in a relationship-oriented manner within the given social conditions. The norms and values of an organization shape the possibilities for action. Social competence means empathizing with other actors, selecting, and adapting suitable strategies for action, consciously shaping relationships, and building networks. This also includes strategic self-presentation and, especially for women, a very reflective handling of emotions and physicality.

Emotional Labor as Micropolitical Competence

The strategic handling of emotions and emotionality in the workplace is part of micropolitical competence and is a central political field of action, especially for women. In sociology, the management of emotions has been described with the term emotional labor (Hochschild, 1983). Emotional labor means to use emotions consciously and purposefully according to the norms of the respective organization or situation. It takes place to varying degrees in all work contexts, including management positions (see Rastetter, 2008; Rastetter & Jüngling, 2014). Display rules (which feelings should be shown?) and feeling rules (which feelings should be experienced?) dominate everywhere. Emotional labor within organizations is becoming more and more important, as feelings or the expression of feelings are increasingly seen as a subjective resource that can be used profitably (see point 2). The management of emotions is thus part of professional competence (see also Sell et al. in this volume).

Women with career ambitions have a special need for "emotion regulation competence" for two reasons: First, the higher they rise, the more they find themselves in a male-dominated culture with male-dominated rules and norms. Additionally, expectations are placed on them, especially as a female minority, which are based on traditional gender stereotypes and ideas of femininity. This applies particularly to the area of emotionality. Even in high-ranking positions, women are perceived first as women and secondly as managers. Rudman and Phelan (2008) refer to the "backlash effect" for women in management positions: Women experience negative effects when stereotypical expectations are violated. Both women and men tend to "punish" women for dominant leadership behavior. This results in an unsolvable dilemma for female managers: Either they behave typically female and thus untypical for a manager, in which case they are liked but not respected. Alternatively, they behave like a typical manager, in which case they are respected as such but not liked (ibid.). "Women in positions of authority are thought too aggressive or not aggressive enough, and what appears assertive, self-confident, or

entrepreneurial in a man often looks abrasive, arrogant, or self-promoting in a woman" (Ely et al., 2011, p. 477).

The demands placed on emotion management and self-regulation by female managers are therefore high: They must observe management's emotion rules and deal competently with gender-specific expectations. The empirical findings presented in the following come from a research project on "Micropolitics and promotion competence of women." The aim of the study was to further develop the concept of micropolitics with regard to the dimension of gender and to clarify whether coaching oriented toward politics can support female junior managers in their professional development (see inter alia Cornils et al., 2012; Jüngling & Rastetter, 2012). We derived emotional interaction rules from the qualitative research data (interview statements and group discussions), which we interpret as communicative expectations in the sense of behavioral norms with which the participants were confronted and as junior managers also socialized with. They are to be understood as display rules.

Rule 1: Be Cool and Confident

> You also have to play the stag sometimes, i.e. be deliberately tougher, harder than you want to be, because the employees need a clear announcement. It is an acting class then.

This manager is aware that she has a role to play as a superior. She sees her appearance as a tough superior explicitly as strategic surface acting (see Mucha, 2016). She assumes that she alone will not bring her employees to the desired performance with friendliness and understanding. The norm of staying cool and confident, however, works more comprehensively. Another manager says: "*At work I'm a real block of ice because they want someone who always keeps a cool head. I would never cry at work.*" The expression of weak feelings such as sadness, fear, or shame is considered unmanly (Lewis, 2000; Symons, 2007) and therefore inappropriate for any manager, especially a female one. A manager will therefore never say that he is afraid, but at most, that he is facing great challenges.

Rule 2: Ignore Sexual Harassment and Control Sexual Attraction

> When you're young and somehow they're hitting on you, or they look at your blouse for too long, then you suddenly feel insecure or blush, and that's always bad, because then the men grin and have actually achieved what they wanted, or you don't know what you want to say anymore. So you really have to build up an armor.

A particularly difficult challenge is dealing with sexual harassment. Since many women fear that open rejection of harassment is perceived as too aggressive, they

often choose defensive strategies such as ignoring, trivializing, or avoiding sexualized interactions. Female managers must draw clear boundaries with male colleagues, superiors, mentors, or business partners to be perceived as professional. This can be extremely complicated when at the same time there is a requirement to remain friendly. It is just as delicate, as our case study at the beginning shows, to deal with sexual attraction, and this applies to both sexes. In such situations, the ability to communicate confidently through appropriate professional proximity or distance is needed.

Rule 3: Be caring and Responsible

> The company is full of old men and the team leaders all turn to me. It is always the same: between 40 and 50 their marriage is ruined, they're in their midlife crisis and are totally frustrated with their lives. That's when they come to me with all their emotions.

Caring is one of the classic expectations of women and fits the female archetype of the "good mother" who cares for her family lovingly. Taking on this role can reduce a woman's standing as a manager, since caring for others is considered a weakness in the male manager ideal. If female managers take on a lot of social responsibility, this can stand in the way of their professional advancement. Our second case study illustrates such a situation.

Rule 4: Never be Aggressive

> Colleagues may yell, it's not really much better, but it's assessed differently.

> Because if you say 'no', you're a bitch. So I'll finally say 'no'. 'Come on, don't be a bitch!' Then I say, 'I'm not being a bitch at all'. Because you are always expected to help and to be very mediating.

The regulatory requirements for the emotion "anger/aggression" are particularly strong because it is closely linked to gender stereotypes. Emotionally aggressive means of power, such as an arrogant look, a condescending facial expression, an outburst of rage, are interpreted differently in women than in men. In an experimental study on the effect of emotional expression amongst managers, Lewis (2000) demonstrates the gender-specific differences in the evaluation of feelings: Female managers must appear neutral (unemotional), male managers can appear angry or neutral and still be seen as efficient. The evaluation of the expression of aggression proved to be a central gender-specific difference. The taboo on aggression leads to negative feelings not being expressed, thus leaving emotional dissonance. This creates a feeling of non-authenticity and contributes to burnout. Haubl (2007) therefore pleads for women to develop a positive and constructive relationship with their aggressiveness.

From the behavioral norms described above, it becomes clear what strong pressure to adapt is exerted on female junior managers in minority positions. The tabooing of openly communicated boundaries and thus openly expressed anger is particularly burdening. Effective self-assertion must be carefully considered. Also significant are feelings of insecurity, shame, and powerlessness. A manager from a mechanical engineering company described these contradictions as follows: *"I have the feeling of walking in a minefield. A small detector would often be very useful there."*

The appeal of micropolitics lies in the fact that in every position there are options for action that can be identified and used. However, formal power resources open a larger political field. It is therefore not surprising that the young female managers in our study see fewer opportunities to exert influence than experienced female managers in middle and high management. Sauerborn (2019) questioned this group in her interview study on feelings and power. Their interviewees see themselves as actors and protagonists of affective change. In their higher management position, they develop (in contrast to the beginning of their careers) a self-determined and at the same time affective role, give it individual meaning and thereby create and expand their own emotional scope. Emotional expressions that were interpreted as "weakness" at the beginning of their career, e.g. crying, are reinterpreted by them as: *"I think today I would no longer be ashamed of myself, but say ok, that's how I am."* The interview partners report greater self-acceptance and sovereignty over the course of their careers. *"When I was younger, it was very difficult, especially as a woman you are (devalued) because of your emotions. Where men assert themselves, you are the bitch or the hysterical one. (. . .) By now I can handle it better, it doesn't bother me as much anymore"* (Sauerborn, 2019, p. 160, own translation). These female managers interpret the "female" abilities attributed to them as special, holistic leadership skills that men are lacking. In this way, they expand gender stereotypes and use them in their own interest. However, the younger managers in our study were also able to develop successful options for action with the help of our coaching.

Conclusion

Female managers are faced with the task of acting emotionally and strategically in a particularly complex way. Authenticity is risky for both sexes. Nevertheless, as research shows, male managers have so far been allowed to deviate from the norm emotionally more than female managers and the range of permissible feelings is wider for them. This demonstrates their dominance in management positions. However, the more women get into higher management positions, the more emotional freedom they can claim for themselves. They can use emotional competencies as a power resource and defy stereotypical expectations. In this way, they promote a change in existing emotional norms. To do this they definitely need micropolitical competence. Our case studies show the contradictory constellations in which women find themselves on their career paths. There are dilemmas consisting of stereotypical

self- and third-party expectations, internal and external barriers to action, and contradictions between explicit and implicit rules of interaction. Female managers often operate in a recognition vacuum because as atypical managers in male-dominated cultures, they receive less resonance and acceptance. They often experience double-bind messages. In our view, political self-competence is a prerequisite for not taking difficult situations during a career personally, but rather for strategically reflecting on possible options for action. Two key competencies prove to be particularly useful in this context:

Flexibility and Role Distance

All persons in organizations must distinguish between their own personality and their professional role and manage themselves in their professional role accordingly. Female managers are particularly successful when they deal with role and gender stereotypes in a reflective and flexible way and create a distance from their expected roles. If they accept the fact that they are acting in their professional role as surface acting and part of their task, they can experiment with different ways of acting without having to identify with one option or being forced to commit to one.

Political Emotion and Affect Management

Especially in higher-ranking positions, female managers can develop the sovereignty to deal with affects in a self-confident manner—independent of stereotypical expectations. Emotionality and care then become a part of professionalism just as much as rationality, objectivity, and efficiency. In a consolidated position of power, affective norms can be determined, and stereotypical role conceptions can be changed. Political emotion management expands the scope for female (and male) managers to act self-effectively.

Competencies in empathy, differentiated self and external perception, and emotion regulation are, in addition to the ability to build social networks, central components of micropolitical competence in all professional positions. Some women and men bring these skills with them or acquire them themselves in their professional careers, others can benefit greatly from coaching or further training. This is the intention of our gender-sensitive coaching in micropolitics.

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Mindfulness in Coaching

Christine Bosch and Alexandra Michel

Introduction

Case study: Sarah is mother of two small children. Both, she and her husband work full-time while their children are taken care of in the kindergarten and by a childminder. For Sarah, it is essential to be a good mother, a loving partner, and at the same time successful in her profession as a lawyer. Although, she has organized the care of her children very well, she struggles with the feeling of never fully meeting the requirements of her roles as mother, partner, and lawyer equally. When at work, she thinks of her children and the chores awaiting her at home. When spending time with her family, she thinks of cases and appointments. Consequently, she feels stressed, internally torn, and often guilty. To find ways to improve her work–life balance, she has approached a coach. Together, they work on mindfulness techniques that help her to better separate her work and private-life domains and to more consciously engage in her respective roles. Being mindful implies to experience the present moment in an open, non-judgmental way (Bishop et al., 2004; Brown & Ryan, 2003). By that, mindfulness enables to focus one's attention on what is happening right now and to deal with one's thoughts and feelings in a self-determined way. This kind of self-control is central to both the coach and the client.

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Importance and Application of Mindfulness

The idea of mindfulness traces back to Far Eastern meditation traditions and describes a specific way of experiencing the present moment (Baer, 2003). In Western culture, mindfulness has been spreading since the late 1970s, particularly through its use in therapeutic contexts (Glomb et al., 2011; Kabat-Zinn, 2013). Today, there are numerous conceptualizations with slightly different emphases (e.g., Brown et al., 2007; Shapiro et al., 2006). The two-component model of Bishop et al. (2004) offers a consensus-oriented definition, on which we build upon in the following. According to this model, mindfulness consists, firstly, in regulating one's attention in a certain way (self-regulation of attention) and, secondly, in approaching one's experiences with a certain attitude (orientation to experience). The first component, self-regulation of attention, involves focusing one's attention on one's immediate experiences. It means to be fully present in the here-and-now and perceive what is occurring in this moment, including both, internal processes (e.g., thoughts and feelings) and external perceptions (e.g., sounds). While doing so, it naturally happens that one's attention wanders, for example, because one starts to follow a thought, feeling, or perception. To be mindful means to notice this wandering and to return one's attention to what one is experiencing at this moment. The second component, orientation to experience, characterizes how to approach one's immediate experiences. It comprises an attitude of curiously, openly, and non-judgmentally accepting what one is experiencing at the moment. Together, both components enable a decentralized perspective on one's thoughts and feelings: Rather than perceiving them as an immediate, absorbing reality, it becomes possible to take a step back and perceive one's thoughts and feelings as mental events that come and go (Shapiro et al., 2006, 2008).

The two-component model describes mindfulness as a state (Bishop et al., 2004). The frequency and intensity with which persons experience this state are characterized by the term trait mindfulness (Brown et al., 2007). State mindfulness can be actively trained and positively influences the level of trait mindfulness (Bishop et al., 2004; Kiken et al., 2015). One basic exercise that is suitable for beginners is breathing meditation (Kabat-Zinn, 2006). Here, one anchors one's attention in the present by directing it toward one's breath, following one's breathing in and out, sensing how one's belly rises and falls, and feeling the air flowing through the nose. When the attention starts wandering, it is about noticing the distraction and returning the attention to the breathing (Segal et al., 2002). In addition to such formal, meditation-based exercises, state mindfulness can also be developed informally by consciously performing everyday routines, such as focusing on the feeling of the toothbrush against the teeth when brushing one's teeth (Hülsheger et al., 2013).

Both types of exercises are part of various therapy and intervention approaches, for example, in the treatment of depression, anxiety disorders, chronic pain, or stress (Bishop et al., 2004). Two particularly well-known programs are mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR; Kabat-Zinn 1982; Kabat-Zinn 2006) and mindfulness-based cognitive therapy for depression (MBCT; Segal et al., 2002). Over a period

of 8–10 weeks, they aim to strengthen attention regulation and a mindful attitude in weekly group sessions and through daily tasks for one's individual practice (Hülsheger et al., 2013).

Meta-analyses show positive effects of mindfulness-based programs on symptoms in clinical samples (e.g., Grossman et al., 2004; Gu et al., 2015) and well-being in non-clinical samples (Chiesa & Serretti, 2009; Khoury et al., 2015). There is also evidence that mindfulness training has a positive impact on physiological indicators such as blood pressure (Nyklíček et al., 2013) and heart rate variability (Shearer et al., 2015). Further, studies on trait mindfulness find positive correlations with well-being, such as sleep quality and lower negative affect (Allen & Kiburz, 2012; Brown & Ryan, 2003). In recent years, research in occupational and organizational psychology has become more and more interested in mindfulness within the context of work. Studies show a variety of positive relations, for example, with recovery (Hülsheger et al., 2014, 2015), work–life balance (Michel et al., 2014), and work and leadership performance (Reb et al., 2014, 2015).

Mindfulness in Coaching

The essence of mindful behavior is to regulate one's attention and attitude, such that one can be non-judgmentally in the present moment. In coaching, this can be helpful for both the coach and the client (Passmore & Marianetti, 2007; Virgili, 2013), as fully engaging in the session is the basis for an open and empathic exchange. In addition, specific mindfulness exercises may support clients in achieving their coaching goals.

Mindfulness for the Coach

Coaches often pursue various activities. If they work as full-time coaches, they talk to several clients per day and have to get involved with new concerns and build up empathic relationships again and again. If they work as part-time coaches and perhaps additionally as trainers and/or management consultants, they must be able to focus their attention on the respective context and on their different roles. Mindfulness techniques can help coaches to concentrate on their client, to regulate their emotions, to show empathy, to reflect on their behavior, as well as to promote their self-awareness:

- Focusing on the client: Mindfulness helps coaches to mentally prepare for the session, to let go of the past, and to focus on the client's concerns (Davis, 2014; Passmore & Marianetti, 2007). If their thoughts wander during the session, mindfulness can help coaches to return their attention to the current coaching session (Passmore & Marianetti, 2007).

- Regulating one's emotions: Prior to a coaching session, mindfulness can help coaches let go of emotions and enter the session openly. During a session, a decentralized attitude, i.e., a certain distance to one's own and to the client's emotions, helps to not get overwhelmed (Cavanagh & Spence, 2013; Passmore & Marianetti, 2007). By that, the coach can remain authentic, capable of action, and can take a resource- and solution-oriented perspective.
- Establishing empathy: Giving one's undivided attention to the client, can facilitate to take the client's perspective and thus to more deeply understand their concerns and emotions (Davis, 2014; Passmore & Marianetti, 2007).
- Reflecting on one's behavior and promoting self-awareness: Practicing mindfulness can strengthen one's insights into own values and behavioral patterns that guide or influence one's coaching (Cavanagh & Spence, 2013). That way, mindfulness enables to meet the client with a positive attitude and to listen without judging (Davis, 2014). Moreover, it can help to overcome the often automatic tendency to offer direct advice (Cavanagh & Spence, 2013; Davis, 2014) and enhance the capability to take a meta-perspective (Davis, 2014; Passmore & Marianetti, 2007).

Mindfulness for the Client

For clients, practicing mindfulness may be beneficial in the following ways:

- Focusing on the coaching process: Just like coaches, clients can use mindfulness techniques to prepare for a session, leave their everyday life behind, and be open to their own development and learning processes (Passmore & Marianetti, 2007). For instance, starting a session with a short mindfulness exercise may help coach and client to direct their attention to the upcoming coaching process. During a session, small hints such as symbols can help to redirect attention to the current process when the mind wanders (Cavanagh & Spence, 2013).
- Accessing new perspectives: Coaching aims at finding ways to achieve job-related goals. A challenging aspect here is to let go of previous ideas and points of view in order to be open to new approaches. If the client succeeds in adopting a decentralized attitude, the gained distance facilitates to step out of mental automatisms, stop ruminating, set goals, and explore new avenues (Cavanagh & Spence, 2013).
- Accepting and appreciating oneself: Mindfulness can support clients in becoming more aware of their own values and needs and thus strengthen their self-efficacy and self-regulation as well as help them set appropriate goals (Cavanagh & Spence, 2013).
- Dealing with unpleasant emotions: Mindfulness contributes to become aware of one's emotions, such as worries and fears, but also to let them pass and thus remain capable of finding solutions and acting upon them (Cavanagh & Spence, 2013; Passmore & Marianetti, 2007).

Specific Application Fields of Mindfulness in Coaching

In addition to the immediate benefits mindfulness offers for the coach, the client, and the coaching process in general, it can also be helpful with regard to specific coaching issues. Here, the options range from promoting the client's mindfulness principally to using mindfulness as a technique to deal with acute stressful situations. For the latter, short breathing meditations such as the three-minute breathing space (Segal et al., 2008) are particularly suited, as they can easily be performed anywhere (Segal et al., 2002). Topics that mindfulness can be useful for include for example:

- Mindfulness and stress reduction: According to the transactional stress model (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984), the feeling of having stress arises from the interaction between actual demands and their evaluation by an individual. Focusing on the present moment can help clients who feel rushed and overworked to take a step back. With a mindful attitude, they can learn not to let themselves be guided by automatic responses and overwhelmed by their thoughts and feelings, but to create a distance that allows them to acknowledge their thoughts and feelings and then letting them go (Passmore & Marianetti, 2007).
- Mindfulness and recovery: Besides enabling to better cope with stress, mindfulness also promotes recovery and sleep (Hülsheger et al., 2014, 2015). For clients who find it difficult to fall asleep, who wake up at night and start pondering, or feel restless after work, coaches might offer short meditation exercises to help them relax and direct their attention to the present moment.
- Mindfulness and work-life balance: To relax and recover in the evenings and on weekends, it is crucial to mentally and emotionally leave work behind. Mindfulness has proven to be an effective strategy for switching off from work (Michel et al., 2014). For clients like Sarah who feel overwhelmed and torn apart in their daily lives, coaches could teach mindfulness exercises such as letting go and being in the moment as a means to consciously and actively shape the transitions between their different roles and life domains. Infobox 1 presents elements of a mindfulness coaching developed by the authors to promote work–life balance (Michel et al., 2014).
- Mindfulness and work and leadership performance: The performance of employees who experience themselves as more mindful in their work is rated higher by their supervisors (Reb et al., 2015). One of the mechanisms discussed is that mindfulness broadens the view of what is going on in one's environment. This could contribute to realizing developments and responding effectively to them. In difficult situations, mindfulness can also help to free oneself from worries, deal constructively with one's own mistakes and thus remain capable of action. Additionally, it enables to be fully present in social interactions (Glomb et al., 2011; Reb et al., 2015). For clients who worry about their work performance and therefore experience pressure, coaches could, for instance, use attention-regulating exercises to enhance their client's ability to fully focus on the task at hand. Furthermore, exercises fostering a mindful attitude could be used to improve emotion regulation. Finally, for managers who approach a coach

because they want to develop their leadership skills, mindfulness could be used to promote social competence and self-regulation (Reb et al., 2014).

Infobox 1

Mindfulness-based coaching as a cognitive-emotional segmentation strategy to promote work–life balance (cf. Michel et al., 2014).

According to Boundary Theory (Ashforth et al., 2000; Nippert-Eng, 1996), people differ in their preference for how much they want to integrate (i.e., inter-weave) or segment (i.e., delimit) their various roles and environments in life. If thoughts and feelings from one life domain unintentionally interfere with engaging in roles of another domain, this can be perceived as burdensome (Carlson & Frone, 2003; van Steenbergen et al., 2007).

Mindfulness supports us in dealing with our attention and our thoughts and feelings in a self-determined way. Hence, mindfulness qualifies as a cognitive-emotional segmentation strategy, i.e., as a strategy that enables us to prevent thoughts and feelings from unintentionally taking hold of us or, if so, helps us to notice this and to redirect our attention to the current role.

For an impression of how mindfulness can be used as a cognitive-emotional segmentation strategy in a coaching process, we exemplarily present three modules of a coaching program developed by the authors. It is an online-based program that participants can carry out on their own. However, the underlying ideas can also be transferred to a classic coaching setting.

Module 1: Reflecting on one's segmentation behavior

The first module aims at supporting clients in becoming aware of their segmentation experience and behavior. For that purpose, clients receive information on how thoughts and feelings related to the past or future can distract from being in the present (Nolen-Hoeksema et al., 2008). Furthermore, they are instructed to: (a) remember situations in which they had difficulties focusing on the present and to (b) consciously pay attention to how well they succeed in doing so over the next couple of days.

Module 2: Being in the present moment

The second module introduces the concept of mindfulness based on the two-component model by Bishop et al. (2004). In the following, it highlights the first component, the self-regulation of attention, aiming at empowering clients to become aware of their current experiences and to return their attention to it whenever their thoughts drift away. The module addresses how focusing on the breath can help to anchor thoughts and feelings in the present (Kabat-Zinn, 2006). As an example, below you find a three-minute breathing exercise to be practiced daily (based on the three-minute breathing space by Segal et al., 2008, Weiss et al., 2011).

For a mindful start into your evening please perform this breathing exercise for the next 5 days at the beginning of your evening. Choose time and place to your convenience and additionally perform the exercise, whenever you want to refrain from work-related thoughts or feelings.

3-minute breathing exercise

1. Take an upright, comfortable posture. Ask yourself: "What is my experience at this moment . . . thoughts . . . feelings . . . body sensations?"
   Notice them, even if they might be uncomfortable.
2. Focus your attention on your breath, on each inhalation and each exhalation. When your thoughts wander, bring them back.
3. Extend your attention to your whole body.

Mindfulness takes time and practice to unfold! Hence, be patient with yourself. This is not about performing particularly well and keeping your mind from any wandering, but about firmly and at the same time gently bringing your attention back to the present moment every time you notice that it drifts away.

Module 3: Dealing with unwanted thoughts and feelings.
   The third module emphasizes the decentralized perspective in coping with current thoughts and feelings based on the second component of the model by Bishop et al. (2004), orientation to experience. Using guided exercises (Kabat-Zinn, 2006; Siegel, 2010), clients learn to encounter their thoughts and feelings more openly, to accept them without judging them, and to let them go again.

Conclusion

Applying mindfulness in coaching can be beneficial for the coach and the client. Not only may a mindful attitude enhance the focus on the coaching process, but also support the emotional regulation of both parties as well as open up new perspectives. However, whereas in therapeutic contexts, especially in group settings, mindfulness has already been shown to reduce clinical symptoms (Grossman et al., 2004; Gu et al., 2015), a systematic evaluation of the effectiveness of mindfulness in individual coaching settings is still pending. Although first positive relations between mindfulness and recovery, work–life balance, and work and leadership performance have been shown in employee samples (Hülsheger et al., 2015; Michel et al., 2014; Reb et al., 2015), many questions are still unanswered including the following:

1. What is mindfulness' contribution to coaching success?
   Mindfulness techniques are one of several possible methods in coaching. As with all multicomponent programs, the question of differential effectiveness remains open (Virgili, 2013). Since coaching processes must always be individually tailored to the client's question, evaluating the effect of mindfulness in coaching is a challenging research task. However, this is the way to find out

whether mindfulness enhances the client's self-regulation ability independent of the coaching question, and whether mindfulness supports finding solutions for specific coaching questions.

2. What kind of training in mindfulness does a coach need?

According to Virgili (2013), a necessary basis for successfully applying mindfulness in coaching is that coaches not only have a sound knowledge of mindfulness techniques (e.g., MBSR; Kabat-Zinn, 2006), but engage in mindfulness meditation themselves. Only then they are able to authentically convey the techniques and the underlying attitude.

3. Which factors influence the effectiveness of mindfulness?

Mindfulness will only unfold its effects in coaching if clients are willing to engage with the concept. In addition, more intensive processes require a mindfulness practice outside of the coaching sessions. Thus, even if coaches can teach the techniques authentically, they should critically examine whether these fit their clients and whether their clients are willing to integrate mindfulness into their everyday lives.

Also, there are situations in coaching in which mindfulness is less suited. For example, if a client experiences stressors in the work context, then options for changing the work situation should be discussed. Coaches could, for instance, steer the coaching process through solution-oriented questions and systematically accompany the clarification of what the client wants. This requires thinking beyond the present. Moreover, it can be very helpful for clients to deeply feel and let out thoughts and emotions related to situations at work in order to get closer to their coaching requests and professional goals.

Despite these open questions, mindfulness evolved as an important concept in many studies and has been successfully integrated into various intervention settings. Evidence for use in the work context are also positive. This is a promising starting point for the transfer to coaching processes.

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Motivation and Goal Setting with Motto-Goals in Coaching

Julia Weber and Maja Storch

Case Study

Mary is 54 years of age and came to coaching because she wants to learn to set boundaries to say *no.* She has two adult children and three grandchildren, is married and works part-time as a medical secretary in a large group practice. *You know, this has been my theme all my life. No matter if in private or professional life, everybody always comes to me and asks me for help! And I am here, jumping in and helping. In the past, this was not a problem for me and I enjoyed doing it. Lately, however, I have noticed that I am tired and exhausted and just cannot go on like this.* Mary says that she has reached her physical and psychological limits in the last few months with her various tasks—in her secretarial work, her function as mother and grand-mother and with her house and garden—and has realized that she has to change something. *I really believe that a large part of my stress and strain is my fault, as I still take on too many* ad hoc *tasks in addition to my planned professional and private duties, so that others are relieved. It cannot go on like this. I have to learn to set boundaries and say no sometimes. That is why I am here and I am hoping you can help me.*

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The Theoretical Elements of Motto-Goals

The development of the goal type *motto-goals* was based on a synopsis of three theoretical elements (see Zurich Resource Model ZRM, Storch & Krause, 2017). These include considerations from *dual process theories*, which distinguish between a conscious and an unconscious system and can be used to explain evaluations and action control. Here, the question of the role of affective evaluations in creating motivation will also be clarified. How do you explain scientifically that some people blaze with enthusiasm for a goal, while others strive for the same goal merely due to rational considerations? As a second point, we looked at the issue of different levels of construction on which goals can be developed. The third point is to determine in which linguistic form the formulation of goals is best suited to create goal commitment and motivation.

Two Systems: The Mind and the Unconscious

The distinction between analytical thinking and holistic intuition has emerged from a long tradition in the history of the humanities and psychology. The differentiation of two systems for explaining phenomena such as willpower, self-control, and self-regulation can be found in several psychological models (see overview in Sowden et al., 2015). Metcalfe and Mischel (1999) distinguish between a *hot* and a *cool system*. Emotions form the basis of the *hot system*, which is also known as the *go-system*. It works impulsively and quickly. The *cool system*, which is also called the *know system*, is cognitive, slow, and planning. The *Reflective Impulsive Model* by Strack et al. (2009) explains behavior as the joint product of an *impulsive* and a *reflexive* system. The former is permanently active, while the work of the reflexive system is influenced by cognitive capacity. Kahneman (2012) also distinguishes two systems: system 1 works automatically and fast, largely effortlessly and without voluntary control, and system 2, which directs attention to strenuous mental activities. "The operation of system 2 is often accompanied by the subjective experience of being in control, freedom of decision and concentration" (Kahneman, 2012, p. 33). Kuhl (2001) with his Theory of *Personality System Interactions (PSI-Theory)* has developed a theory of four cognitive systems of the human psyche, which also distinguishes between conscious and unconscious content. On the conscious side, he sees the intention memory and the object recognition system, on the unconscious side the extension memory (the self) and the intuitive behavior control. In the following, we use the terms mind and unconscious for the two systems (Table 1).

The mind works slowly and accurately. If the mind has processed an information, one can communicate the evaluation of the mind via language. In the best case, this takes 900 milliseconds, but it can sometimes take hours, days, or weeks for the mind to figure things out. Through its serial information processing, the mind can only process one piece of information at a time. This way of working becomes clear as

Table 1 Comparison of mind and unconscious (cf. Storch & Krause, 2017)

	Mind	Unconscious
Processing mode	Conscious	Unconscious
Speed	Slow	Quick
Means of communication	Language	Somatic markers (feeling)
Information processing	Serial	Parallel
Time horizon	Future	Here and now
Evaluation	Right/wrong	I like/I do not like

soon as one is asked to think two thoughts at the same time. This is not possible with this information processing system. However, this system is able to work very accurately and precisely and also to make calculations for the future. The evaluation of the mind is based on "what is right and what is wrong" (Kuhl, 2001). Education and social norms often play a decisive role here.

The unconscious on the other hand works fast. Within 200 milliseconds an evaluation or a proposal for action is available from this system (Ferguson & Porter, 2009). However, this is not communicated via language as in the case of the mind, but rather via vague feelings, which Damasio (2003) calls *somatic markers.* The evaluation is carried out regarding the well-being of the whole organism either as a positive feeling (controls appetite behavior) or as a negative feeling (controls aversion behavior). The information processing of the unconscious is parallel. It is able to process a lot of information from the in- and environment at the same time and to form an evaluation in the time horizon *here and now* (Kuhl, 2001). The rating category of this system is based on what *I like and dislike*, what is beneficial to individual well-being and what is disturbing.

The mind and the unconscious work differently, and above all they evaluate according to different criteria. In counselling, coaching, or psychotherapy, we often deal with clients who suffer from the fact that the evaluation of the mind does not match the evaluation of the unconscious. The classic case is people who have good intentions but do not implement them because the unconscious does not consider these intentions to be pleasant. When a person works on a goal with his/her consciousness, i.e., with his/her mind, this goal is initially formed independently of how the *felt* evaluation of this goal looks like. The unconscious on the other hand does not know anything like specific, concrete goals. The goal variant, which comes from the unconscious, is a general *target corridor*, as Scheffer and Kuhl call this goal type (2006, p. 41). Whether or not a general goal is considered desirable by the unconscious mind is not checked by logical arguments, as with the mind, but by somato-affective signals, as described above. Somatic markers can be perceived in their affective component as basal affects, i.e., not yet as differentiated emotions, but as diffuse affect impressions in the sense of a dual evaluation: plus or minus, good or bad, seek or avoid.

When people perceive their somatic markers and notice a discrepancy between their consciously mindful goal and the somato-affective evaluation of the unconscious, they find themselves in a state of inner conflict and discomfort. If you have

not learned how to synchronize and work on the discrepancies between the two systems, you have only two options: either you let go of the consciously set goal and give in to the negative evaluations of the unconscious, but then you risk not doing something that the mind has classified as *reasonable* or *unavoidable.* Or one bypasses the negative evaluation of the unconscious by forcing oneself to pursue the goal set by the mind. This option is useful if it is a short intervention such as a visit to the dentist. However, those who try to implement a professional or private goal over a longer period of time against the resistance of the unconscious will either fail—as has been shown in several studies (Muraven, 2012; Baumeister & Tierney, 2011) or pay for it with a permanent feeling of self-alienation and discomfort, which can lead to burnout or depression (Job et al., 2010; Baumeister & Alquist, 2009; Baumann et al., 2005).

Regarding motivation, the responsibility of mind and unconscious is as follows (Scheffer & Kuhl, 2006): The mind is a goal-forming and result-oriented system. This means that the focus is on the incentives that lie outside the activity itself, the motivation is not directed toward experiencing the activity itself. The mind is responsible for the extrinsic aspect of motivation. If the mind wants to form goals that activate intrinsic motivation, it needs coordination with the unconscious (Deci & Ryan, 2012; Kuhl, 2010; Job & Brandstätter, 2009; Kuhl & Koole, 2005). The synchronization of conscious and unconscious parts of a person's motivational structure consists of a dialogue between the mind and the unconscious. The unconscious is the only cognitive system that takes into account all personally relevant experiences and can also have all contradictions present at the same time, so that it can search for holistic solutions from an overview position.

Goal Types

According to the research on goal hierarchies, goals can be distinguished according to different types, depending on how they are formulated linguistically (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Within the framework of these theories, there are two levels—a high, general, global versus a low, specific, local level—on the one hand, and a hierarchical gradation of these levels on the other (Storch, 2008). Goals are often ordered hierarchically (Carver & Scheier, 2012).

Storch (2008) has developed the goal pyramid (Fig. 1) as a visualization and assignment aid for different goal types. On the attitude level are the high, general, and global goal types, which are formulated rather abstractly. On the behavioral level, low, specific, and local goal formulations are to be found, which are formulated concretely. The outcome level concerns a person's desire to consciously give information about what the person wants to achieve as a result.

Depending on how goals are formulated, they can be assigned to three different levels. The *behavioral level* includes the concrete, result-related goal type of mind, which was examined by Locke and Latham (2013), for example. As a result of their decades of research, they came to the recommendation that goals should be
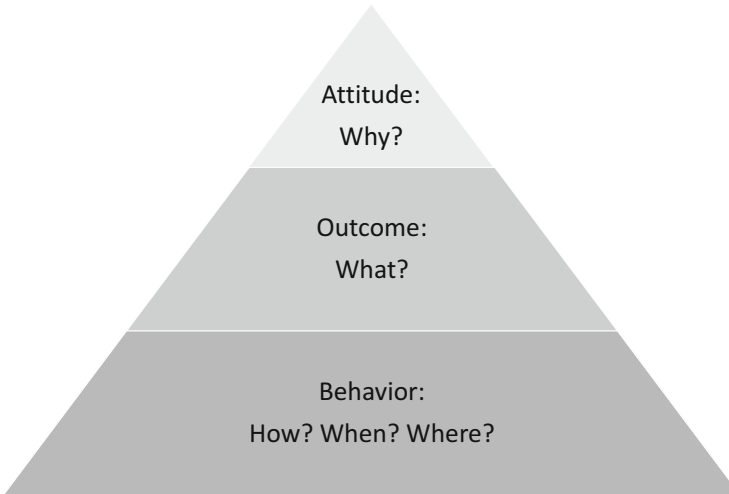
Fig. 1 Pyramid of goals (Storch, 2008, p. 70)

formulated as high as possible in the sense of demanding and as specific as possible in order to have a high chance of success. According to goal-setting theory (Wegge & Schmidt, 2009; Locke & Latham, 1990), raising the goal standard leads to increased performance, especially when the demanding goal is specified in concrete terms. For realistically difficult tasks, performance increases linearly with the difficulty of the objectives (Locke & Latham, 2013), so more effort is required when more is demanded. This type of goal is also known in practice under the acronym S. M.A.R.T.

Another type of goal that can be assigned to the behavioral level are if-then plans (Janczyk et al., 2015). They aim at the implementation of the goal after an actionable intention has been formed. The effectiveness of if-then plans has been confirmed in various areas (overview in Oettingen et al., 2015; Faude-Koivisto & Gollwitzer, 2009).

In addition to the goal types at the behavioral level, there are goal types at the *attitude level*, which have been intensively studied in goal psychology. This type of goal is useful for the development of goals that are supported by both the unconscious and the mind. However, this type of goal has not yet been widely used in practice. These are types of goals that are not so much aimed at concretely observable and measurable behavior, but rather at the attitude, the mind-set of the person setting the goal. Dweck's research on *performance* versus *mastery goals refers to* this (Rusk et al., 2011). In the performance area, for example, people can be distinguished according to whether they focus on finding out how competent they are (performance goals) or on learning from the task (mastery goals). Higgins (Schooler & Higgins, 2012) also examines two types of attitudes in his *Regulatory Focus* Theory, a *promoting* and a *preventing* focus of the person.

The comparison of goals at the attitude and behavioral level and the related effects on the achievement of goals and the well-being of the person were investigated in several studies. For example, Fujita et al. (2006) examined the effect of these two levels on the ability to self-regulate. One group of subjects should think about *why* people did something, while another group of subjects thought about *how* they did it. They found that people have better self-control when they set their goal at the attitude level than when they specifically and concretely thought about their goal. Gollwitzer and Oettingen (2012) also describe that the absence of a *why* for an action or goal can lead to negative affect that negatively influences its implementation. Schutte et al. (2012) were able to show that the experience of the "*why*," i.e., the perceived meaning of an activity, has a significant effect on the intensity of positive affect (i.e., motivation).

Ferguson (2007) was able to show in four studies that the attitude toward a goal significantly predicts the pursuit of the goal, while also emphasizing (Ferguson & Porter, 2009) that attitudes are changeable. As Ferguson (2008) points out, it can be assumed that the faster and more spontaneously a person is able to generate positive affective attitudes toward goal-relevant stimuli, the easier it is to achieve the goal. Particularly relevant for goal psychology is the result of Ferguson (2007) that not only material objects produce affective attitudes, but that a goal is also coupled with affective attitudes and that the affective evaluation of a goal has an effect on the implementation of the goal. Ferguson understands goals as a mental representation that includes both the final state of the goal and information about the means, activities, and objects that can either facilitate or hinder the achievement of the goal. In this context, affective evaluation is also seen as part of the goal construct. According to Ferguson, the affective attitude can be seen as an index of the power of a goal to produce the related behavior. Motto-goals from the *Zurich Resource Model* are assigned to the attitude level in the goal pyramid.

Multiple Code Theory According to Bucci

In the multiple code theory, Bucci (2002) combines psychoanalytical thoughts with the considerations of the brain researcher Damasio (2003). The theory assumes that information from the environment is perceived and processed by the human system in two types of *codes*: *subsymbolic* (physical, emotional) and *symbolic*. According to Bucci (2002) humans have three variants of information processing. The first variant does without symbols and refers exclusively to physical sensations and basal affects. These include the somatic markers of Damasio (2003), which are perceived somatically and/or emotionally. The symbolic codes can be divided into verbal (letters/words) and non-verbal (images). Information can be encoded via body sensations, images, and/or words. Words that symbolically and verbally encode information are conscious. Body feelings, which code subsymbolically emotional information, occur below the threshold of consciousness. Images that symbolically encode information
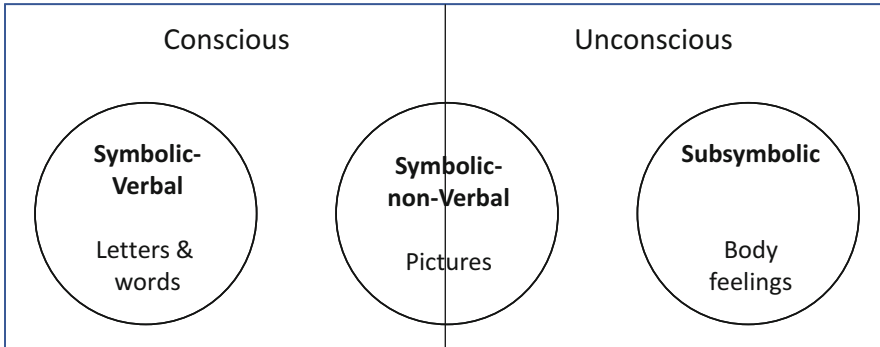
Fig. 2 Information codes according to Bucci (based on Storch, 2009)

non-verbally can be produced on both the conscious and the unconscious levels (Fig. 2).

The three variants of processing are connected to each other by what Bucci (2002) calls the *referential process*. The quality of the connection between these three systems is the basis for healthy mental functioning. Images are the decisive link between the sub-symbolic and the symbolic-verbal system. Through the symbolic-non-verbal system of images, one moves from the conscious symbolic-verbal system to the unconscious subsymbolic-bodily system.

If these considerations are applied to the formation of goals, the following sequence results: A consciously set goal must be coordinated with the unconscious to create intrinsic motivation. The code of the unconscious is a pre-symbolic, somato-affective marker. In order to ensure optimal alignment with the unconscious, the consciously set goals must be expressed in words that produce strong and clear images, because strong and clear somato-affective signals are coupled to them, which are needed to make the alignment process work. The recommended order for building motivational goals is to look for a picture for the conscious goal, then work out the appropriate words for the picture, build an attitude goal from these words, and tailor this linguistic structure, which is closely linked to the world of pictures, to the somato-affective signals from the body coupled to it.

Motto-Goals in Practice

Now, what about Mary who wants to learn to set boundaries and say *no*? In ZRM coaching, as the first step, a picture (Krause & Storch, 2018) is chosen. Mary is instructed to take a picture that elicits only positive somato-affective signals; she chooses a picture with jumping dolphins. With the help of the coach, the interpreting process is now started in order to form a motto-goal on the topic of *setting boundaries and saying no*. The ideas for the picture that Mary likes particularly well are the following: trusting one's instinct, freedom, jumping, submerge, leaps in

the air, playful, echo sounder, the vastness of the sea. With the help of these words, the attitude level is entered with regard to the topic and at the end of the process, Mary has the motto-goal: *I trust my instincts, enjoy playful leaps in the air*, *and allow myself to submerge.*

Often it is enough to develop a motto goal in coaching to initiate effective action. In the context of the *Rubicon model* of Heckhausen and Gollwitzer (Gollwitzer, 1995) from motivational psychology, the formation of a motto-goal can be described as a phase transition between a pondering and a volitional consciousness. Typical motto-goals that have been created with the ZRM method are, for example:

> I enjoy my thick bearskin and stretch all four (stress regulation).
> I'm in charge of this pigsty! (performance talk with staff).
> I am the captain, hold the helm firmly in my hand and sail to the destination. (Master's thesis writing).
> Like a tiger, I dance into the man's world. (Flirting and dating).
> Deeply-rooted I grow towards the sun. (Preparation and follow-up of lectures).
> I am the gardener—my plants also grow by themselves. (delegating work).

Due to the equifinality of goals at the attitude level (Kruglansky & Kopetz, 2009), motto-goals allow for spontaneous and situationally adequate goal-achieving action immediately after they are formed. This type of goal unfolds its effect by changing the attitude towards a problem. "And out of this changed attitude the self automatically and quickly generates a new action that lies within the target corridor that the motto goal sets" (Storch & Kuhl, 2012, p. 223). Target corridor refers to the huge network of experience of the unconscious, which determines the direction of actions from an attitude. In cases where, in addition to learning a new pattern of action, an old pattern must be unlearned, other measures must be taken in addition to the motto goal. This also applies to cases in which the environment of the client has situational cues that *trigger* old, undesirable behavioral routines.

Motto-goals ensure intrinsic motivation, generate experiencing meaning in life and self-determination and stimulate attitude change (Storch, 2009; Weber, 2013); Weber (2013) was able to show in her work that motto-goals generate intrinsic motivation, self-determination, and optimism by synchronizing the mind and the unconscious. Furthermore, they improve the self-regulation of affect (Weber, 2007, 2013; Weber & Storch, 2012; Storch et al., 2011) and significantly reduce stress (*salivary cortisol*; Storch et al., 2007) and perceived stress. Through the targeted change in affective evaluation with the participation of the unconscious and the intrinsic motivation that accompanies it, motto-goals open up new ways of goal formation and goal pursuit.

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Motivation, Volition, and Implementation in Coaching

Siegfried Greif

The Gap Between Goals and Actions

How Rigorously Do We Implement Planned Behavior Changes?

After a heart attack and following treatment in hospital, Oliver, a manager, took part in rehabilitation in a clinic for several weeks. The daily light body exercises, through which he was able to improve his physical fitness, have been particularly good for him. At the end of the rehabilitation, the doctor urges him to continue these exercises as planned at least three times a week. He knows how important this is for his health and assures the doctor that he will implement it.

My question, which I often ask about this case example, is: "How long do you think people continue to rigorously implement such intentions that are really important to them?"—Almost everyone estimates that most people only keep them up for 2–3 weeks. Many are therefore very aware of how inconsistent people are in implementing planned behavior changes. According to the results of surveys on health behavior (Tierney et al., 2011), such exercises, which are important for health, are implemented for a somewhat longer period of time, on average for about 3 months. However, even this is not sufficiently consistent.

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Big Questions for Science and Practice

Why do not we put into practice what we have decided to do? The simple answer that some people (including coaches) often give on such questions is that this is due to too low motivation and above all too imprecise goals. A precise clarification of goals is one of the standard methods in coaching (see chapter "Goals in Coaching"). But it is by no means always sufficient, as the case example shows. Although the motivation of Oliver is certainly high and all the requirements for a precise definition of goals are met, he does not hold out and at some point gives up on regular exercise. The question of how the gap between goals and implementation can be bridged is one of the big questions of application-oriented basic psychological research. The following chapter presents a multifaceted spectrum of findings from current research that help to bridge the gap, as well as methods that can be used in coaching. In particular, the latest practical findings from Motivation and Volition Psychology, neuropsychological studies of habits, and coaching methods to support implementation are used.

Motivation and Action

Content Theories

Motivational psychology investigates the inner and outer driving factors of human action. The so-called content theories compile lists of important motives or needs. One of the most popular is Maslow's hierarchy of needs (1954). He distinguishes five types of needs and arranges them in a hierarchy, which is shown in Fig. 1. His central assumption is that the needs on the lower levels of the hierarchy must first be satisfied before the higher levels can have a motivating effect. However, early investigations and practical considerations showed that this assumption could not be maintained (Wahba & Bridwell, 1973). Thus, people in very insecure living conditions may have a need for self-actualization, even when they are suffering from hunger. Conversely, it is also not possible to prove that needs that have generally been satisfied have no motivational significance, as the example of eating addiction shows, or a preference for culinary refined food. It is remarkable that this theory, which has basically been clearly refuted, has become established as a supposedly secure insight in coaching concepts (cf. the GROW model by Whitmore, 1992, see chapter "Coaching Definitions and Concepts") and is passed on in coaching training courses. Apparently, this theory is so plausible that it cannot be wrong. Those who wish to retain some of this humanistic theory of motivation could perhaps use the listing of groups of motives, dispense with the pyramid structure and emphasize that all people can be driven not only by deficit motives (lower levels) but also by personal growth motives (higher levels).
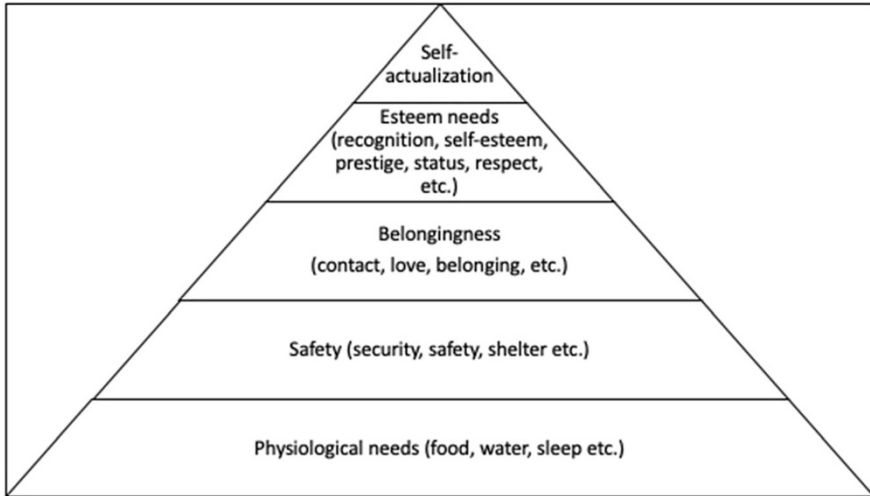
Fig. 1 Maslow's (1954) hierarchy of needs

Process Theories

The so-called process theories of motivation make differentiated assumptions about the inner motivational processes that precede the execution of human actions and empirically test their assumptions. Heckhausen (1991; Heckhausen & Heckhausen, 2018) has developed a comprehensive classical systematization. In his process model, the achieved action result is explained by constructs that follow one another. These include the *incentive value* (anticipated level of positive or negative affect) and *instrumentality* of the consequences of the action (or usefulness of an action in attaining desired consequences), the *expectation* (or subjective probability) that the results will be achieved by the action, the resulting *effort*, and the *skills* required to perform the action. The main components in the process must be multiplied by each other to be able to make predictions about the subsequent *outcomes of the action.* This leads to the plausible conclusion that the person, in spite of strong incentives and a high degree of instrumentality, does not carry out an action if the subjective probability that this will lead to success is zero. Multiplying a value by zero always results in zero. Only when the instrumentality and probability both are greater than zero it is rational to expend efforts. This multiplication corresponds, moreover, to a general model of rational choice.

For application in coaching, this model would, first of all, ask the client for all alternative actions and in particular the respective consequences of the actions and then have them assessed (for example, on a scale of 1–5) how the values of the incentives of the consequences and their instrumentalities are taken together. Then one would ask how great the respective subjective probabilities are and what abilities the person believes to possess to achieve the desired results of the actions. If you then

multiply the components with each other, you get a rationally reasoned motivation strength. However, it should be noted that motives are by no means only based on rationality and that the individual evaluations can change. In coaching, for example, it would be possible for a client to become aware of new action alternatives and resources, which could lead to different results.

Different types of motives are also distinguished in the process model (Heckhausen, 1991; Heckhausen & Heckhausen, 2018). These are social motives such as the *affiliation, power*, and *achievement motive* or *pro- and antisocial expression of the power motive* (such as generosity or repression of people and aggression). Especially, the negative effects of motivation through *fear of failure* as opposed to the *hope for success* in pursuing achievement goals were intensively investigated. If coaching is about achievement goals, it would be important to find out whether clients only try to perform because they fear failure and to help them to overcome this constricting motivation.

Self-efficacy

The expectation of the person that he or she is capable of achieving the results they are striving for was introduced by Bandura (1977) under the term "self-efficacy expectation." As in Heckhausen's motivation model (1991), it can be assumed that this expectation is of fundamental importance. Anyone who expects that he or she will not be able to perform a desired behavior effectively will refrain from doing so and the confidence that you can make something is a strong motive for trying.

Self-efficacy can be determined in the coaching session simply by asking the client to assess their abilities or strengths to implement the required behavior (e.g., "How do you rate your ability to perform a ten-mile run?"). In research, self-efficacy is measured using questionnaire scales (Schwarzer & Jerusalem, 1995). The scales are usually short and are probably among the most widely used constructs in research and application in almost all areas of life; they usually correlate very highly with subsequent behavior. They are also often used to evaluate the effectiveness of coaching. In a meta-analysis, however, Sitzmann (2013) found that self-efficacy, similar to Heckhausen's process model, tends to stimulate future behavior rather than being the result of training. However, this may apply primarily to generalized expectations of self-efficacy, such as "I can always manage to solve difficult problems if I try hard enough" (Schwarzer & Jerusalem, 1995). By contrast, specific training measures or specific coaching can certainly improve the related specific self-efficacy. For example, Webers (2008) finds in coaching to reduce procrastination in learning for exams of business and law students very strong significant improvements in pre-/post-measures of a scale with specific questions such as: "If I feel that my learning organization is ineffective, I usually find ways to change this."

In the field of coaching, de Haan and colleagues in their very large survey find that goal attainment in coaching can be predicted by self-efficacy (see chapter "Coaching Relationship" in this handbook). Apparently, coaches encourage their

clients to reflect on their own abilities and other resources that they can use to achieve their goals (see chapter "Success Factors"). Schwarzer (2004) uses the support of self-efficacy in his model for improving health behavior. As Sutton (2008) states on the basis of empirical studies, this model contributes to bridging the gap between intention and behavior.

Self-determination

A motivation theory that is used today in various fields of application is the Self-Determination Theory (SDT) by Deci and Ryan (2008). In this theory, three general basic needs are distinguished: (1) *Autonomy* (doing something voluntarily or intrinsically motivated, self-controlled and in harmony with one's self-concept; this also includes actions required by other people, as long as there is an insight into their necessity or importance) (2) *competence* (need to master challenging tasks, similar to self-efficacy), and (3) *relatedness* (need to interact with others, and establish meaningful relationships with and for others). SDT is used as a basis for applications in education to promote active learning. Transferred to the field of psychotherapy (Ryan & Deci, 2008, p. 186 f.) or coaching (Spence & Deci, 2013), SDT assumes that clients learn more or change more and improve their mental health if their autonomy in decisions about the goals and processes is greater. If, on the other hand, the goals and processes are determined by external factors (e.g., in coaching where the goals are set and controlled by the supervisor), psychological conflicts arise. "Unless the client internalizes responsibility for the process of change, there can be little hope for long-term success" (Ryan & Deci, 2008, p. 187).

SDT provides a contribution to the analysis of the prerequisites for *intrinsic motivation* in learning and acting. They can be important, especially in coaching with given goals (called 'introjections'). It is assumed that a high intrinsic motivation only arises if both the need for autonomy and competence are satisfied. In coaching, this means that for goals, set by the organization, it is recommended to analyze to what extent they are seen as necessary by the clients and are pursued on their own responsibility, as well as requiring their individual competencies.

As a qualification, it is questionable whether the application of SDT criteria to all types of tasks and to all groups of persons is equally beneficial. For example, Wilson et al. (2008) report that studies on exercises in the area of health behavior do not show consistently positive effects and that there are clear gender differences. It also seems questionable whether it is possible to change behavior habits that are automatically activated by external cues and are strongly habituated (see below).

Social Context

In many motivational theories, the social context is neglected. In a recent review of the state of research on the influence of the social environment on individual motives and goals, Fishbach et al. (2014) show the great importance other people in the social environment can have. It is known from earlier studies that the mere presence of other people leads to them paying more attention to the goals and actions of others. In general, many studies show that individuals generally coordinate their goals and actions with those of other people. This results in phenomena such as conformity and a common view of reality or a balancing of actions in the group.

Conformity depends on the closeness of the group members' social relationships with each other and on their sense of belonging together. Conformal behavior develops not only in small face-to-face groups, but also in larger social contexts or virtual groups. This can be attributed above all to the normative value of the assessments of relevant other persons. It can bring social benefits to the individual through recognition and social connection (Fishbach et al., 2014, pos. 1059). In our case example on rehabilitation after a heart attack, it would be obvious to recommend to the doctor or coach to encourage the client to join a sympathetic gymnastics group or to create a chat group with other rehabilitation participants to implement the individually performed exercises. Studies also show that individuals, for example, in their health behavior, are strongly oriented toward role models (Fishbach et al., 2014, pos. 1215). In coaching, it would therefore be beneficial to look for a role model that the client can follow.

Divergence in groups by no means arises only in internal conflicts. The individual group members may decide to deviate from the group opinions or actions because they want to add something new and enrich the outcome of the group (Fishbach et al., 2014, pos. 1082). Accepting divergences in the group avoids that strong conformity leads to common wrong decisions. A non-reflected adoption of jointly shared views is also problematic (Fishbach et al., 2014, pos. 1247 ff.).

Festinger (1954) assumed in his classical *Theory of Social Comparison* that in order to survive in a complex world, people are dependent on comparing and validating their evaluations among themselves. In evolution, as he postulates, they have been endowed with a basic need for social comparison. As Fishbach et al. (2014) show on the basis of more recent studies, such comparisons may well lead to inappropriate shared views and wrong decisions. In coaching, this leads to the difficult requirement to reflect and question important action-leading perspectives in the social context of the clients. If they communicate their dissenting opinion to the group, this can lead to exclusion. This is probably also a reason why individuals tolerate decisions of the group, which for them are obviously wrong, and behave in a compliant manner instead of offensively defending their dissenting opinion.

Action Planning and Volition: The Rubicon Model

Clarifying Goals Is Not Enough

The reflection and clarification of the client's motives and goals is undoubtedly an important task in many coachings. However, many clients and coaches overestimate the practical importance of goal clarification for the implementation of the actions formulated in the process. Sheeran (2002) evaluated the results of 422 individual research studies with a total of 82,107 respondents and many different goals and showed, on average, only 50% of goals are implemented. To bridge the gap between goals and actions, further psychological prerequisites are required.

The Rubicon Model

Under the name "Rubicon Model," motivational psychologists in the 1990s pointed to an important psychological phase after the clarification of goals (Gollwitzer et al., 1996). They symbolically refer to Julius Caesar's decision to cross the northern Italian river Rubicon with its legions on January 10, 49 B.C. To protect Rome and the republic from military takeover, this small river was not allowed to be crossed by any commander with his legionnaires according to an ancient Roman law, was decreed to prevent the own generals from invading Rome and seizing power. Whoever broke this law was immediately sentenced to death. Caesar's decision has therefore since then been regarded as a paradigmatic example of a firm decision of will with a "point of no return." It is claimed that he uttered the famous sentence "Alea iacta est" (the die has been cast).

In technical terms, the Rubicon model promotes the transformation of a goal into an action if the person, after weighing up various goals and actions, formulates a firm "implementation intention" in an additional act or makes a conscious decision of will (also called a volition).

Formulation of Implementation Intentions

In most studies, the formulation of implementation intentions is carried out with a remarkably simple method (Gollwitzer & Sheeran, 2006). In the first step, participants are asked to select a goal and a related action. They should then consider very carefully when or in which situation they want to carry out the intended behavior in the future. A standard formulation often used in research takes the form of an "if-then sentence" ("If situation Y is encountered, then I will initiate goal-directed behavior X!"). In our introductory example, Oliver after rehab could formulate his

implementation intention similarly as follows: "When I get up, every morning I will start the day with 30 minutes of exercising."

Gollwitzer and Sheeran (2006) have analyzed the effects of such formulations of implementation intentions. To this end, they conducted a meta-analysis of 94 studies on various academic, personal, and health-related goals and compared the effects of goal intentions with and without subsequent formulations of implementation intentions. According to the results of the analysis, the frequency of implementation increases due to the formulation of the implementation intention (statistically significant with $p < 0.05$) and shows moderate-to-strong effects (average $d = 0.65$). Schwarzer (2004, p. 93 ff.) generally uses this method to promote the implementation of health behavior.

When using the method in coaching, it is necessary to explain to clients why it can be important to make a conscious decision to achieve their goals. Then, after clarifying the goals and planning what they are going to do to achieve them, the clients can be asked to consciously take some time to make a firm decision and to imagine how they strengthen their will in the situation and how they activate their potentials and implement the planned actions. In coaching, this moment when the clients firmly decide to implement the planned behavior can often be observed by a tightening of their body posture and speaking in a firm voice.

The Extended Rubicon Model

Unforeseen Difficulties in Implementation

In the historical example, Caesar by no means achieved his political goals immediately after his decision of will and by crossing the Rubicon. He had not foreseen that his opponent, the Consul Gnaeus Pompeius Magnus, did not try to defend the city of Rome militarily, but fled Rome with the Senate and many followers. They also took along the goods that Caesar had promised his legionaries as a reward. Caeaser, thus, had to suppress mutinies of his legionaries and won the power over Rome only after several wars and finally a lucky victory in the battle of Pharsalus.

In coaching, we are also familiar with major and minor unpredicted difficulties in implementing actions and goal achievement with less spectacular goals and plans of our clients. Experience shows that even seemingly simple intentions to start exercising the next morning are often not implemented on the first attempt. Something new happens or an inexpected difficult tasks during the day leads to the postponement of the implementation. The next day, a new beginning is even more difficult, and one continues to procrastinate until one gives up completely, demotivated.

The individual factors (e.g., self-efficacy expectations) that promote or hinder the implementation of what has been learned and the supporting factors in the social and organizational context (e.g., transfer-supporting behavior of superior) are called transfer factors. Schnieders (2016) can confirm similar transfer factors for coaching as they were found for training.

Extensions of the Rubicon Model

In order to support the often difficult phase of the implementation of intentions for action with its particularities more systematically, the Rubicon model was expanded. A first extension refers to resource activation with *Embodiment* according to Storch (2004) and the second focusses on the support of the implementation by the coach or others in a phase of actional implementation according to Greif (2013).

Resource Activation with Embodiment

Storch (2004) divides phase 2 (pre-actional preparation) of the original Rubicon model into two subphases. As shown in Fig. 2, it complements a partial phase for "implementation planning and activation of resources" (2.1). It assumes that it is not enough to activate only the clients' mental resources. Based on the concept of *Embodiment* (see chapter: Embodiment), she recommends that the involvement of the whole body be included and resources be strengthened by coupling mental and bodily components. To this end, clients can use resource-activating pictures that fit in with their individual motto and their implementation plans. In doing so, they should combine their implementation intentions with facial expressions or bodily postures, e.g., a firm posture ready for action and a determined expression.

Actional Implementation, Reflection, and Improvement

In Fig. 2, the second extension is about management and improvement of the implementation as an independent phase 3. This phase can be very short in the simplest case, but often—analogous to Caesar's situation after the crossing of the Rubicon—it can also require a longer process, with initially unsuccessful trials, reflections about the situation and actions, and planning necessary improvements, even with a complete change of goals and plans. If the implementation is not successful from the person's point of view, it can be assumed that this has a demotivating effect. How implementation intentions can be supported and "remotivated" by implementation accompaniment in coaching is explained below.

Changing Habits

It is particularly difficult to change fixed behavioral habits (Adriaanse et al., 2011). Duhigg (2012) concludes in his practice-oriented overview of the state of research

Underlying processes   **Phases**

1. Motivations and goal
   clarification

| Pre-decisional reflection and development of goal intention in social and organization context. |
| "Transition from motivation to goal!" |

2.1 Pre-actional preparation:
    implementation planning
    and activation of resources

| Implementation planning and resource activation with embodiment. |
| "I have a plan, use my resources and tune into it with my whole body!" |

2.2 Pre-actional preparation:
    Volition

| Formulating the implementation intention. |
| "Crossing of the personal Rubicon." (Storch, 2004) |

3. Accompanying the
   implementation of the
   changes

| Managing transfer tasks, reflection about the situation and actions, planning necessary improvements. |
| "If it did not work, I will try again differently or from scratch!" |

4. Post-actional evaluation
   and reflection after entire
   process and self-directed
   transfer onto other
   behavioral changes

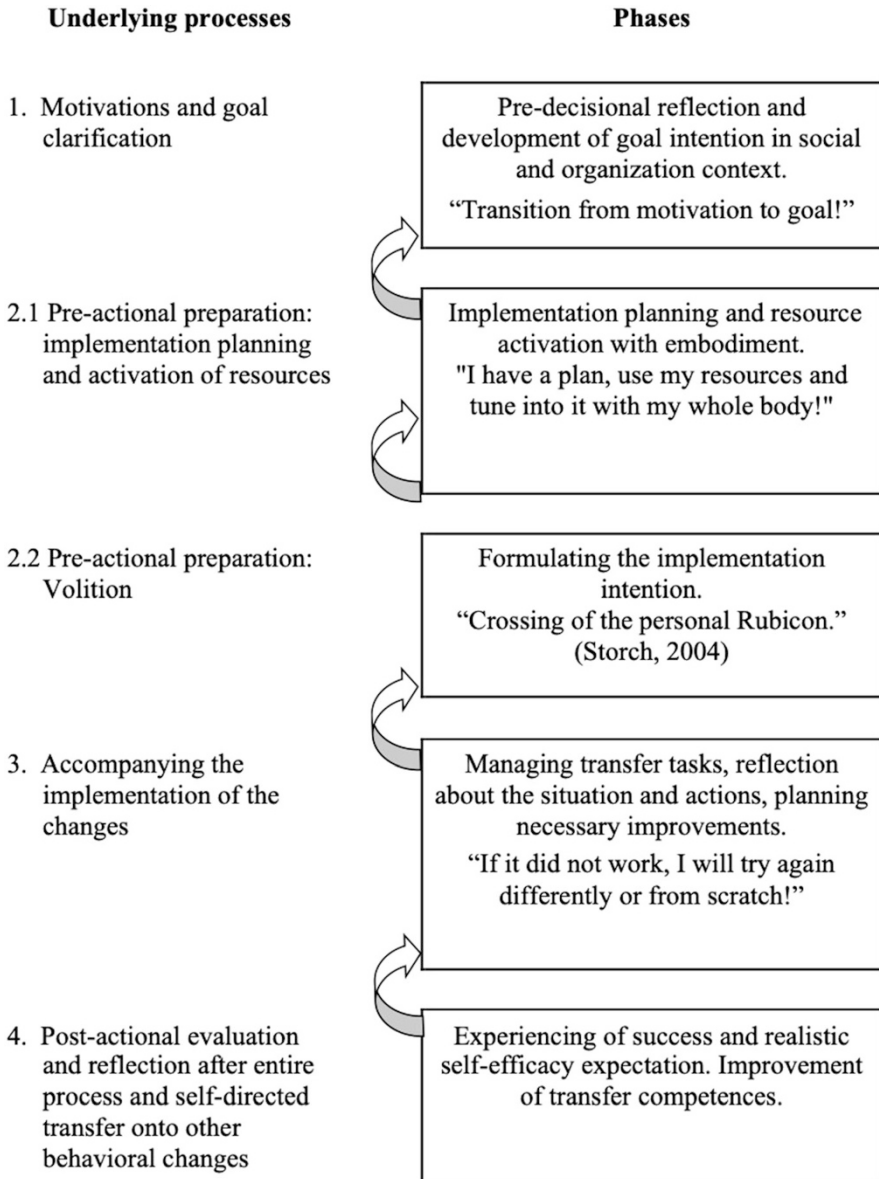| Experiencing of success and realistic self-efficacy expectation. Improvement of transfer competences. |

Fig. 2 Extended Rubicon Model (revised according to Greif 2013, p. 133)

that habits generally have a very high influence on health, performance, financial security, and happiness.

Lally et al. (2010) have investigated how long it takes for students to develop a new stable automated habit. The participants in the study were able to choose for

themselves what they wanted to do every day in the future (e.g., always drink water at lunch or jog for 15 min). To achieve that the new behavioral habit is implemented with a probability of 95%, the study shows that daily repetitions were required on average over a period of 66 days. However, the range of the number of days required by individuals to reach this level of implementation was very wide and ranged from 18 to 254 days.

As Duhigg (2012) summarizes, habits are couplings of cues (or triggers) with actions or behavioral routines, which are repeated again and again as cycles. They are learned because the coupling has been strengthened by rewarding experiences (see chapter "Behavior Modification"). According to a neuroscientific study, after such routines have been learned, they are apparently initiated without activation of cortical brain regions responsible for conscious action regulation. They are activated automatically with the involvement of the basal ganglia, which are also known to be needed to perform automatic motor movements (Yin & Knowlton, 2006). The advantage of this automatic, unconscious activation is probably that it can be performed without mental effort. The basal activation of these processes is not consciously perceived and there is a tendency for the habit to unintentionally enforce itself again and again when the cue is perceived. Thus, small distractions can be enough to make you "forget" that you wanted to change your habit. To unlearn the habit, it is not enough to learn new behavior through many repetitive exercises. The automatic cue must be superimposed by a new cue or its perception has to be changed. After work, the comfortable armchair with the book next to it can be an example of a strong cue, which invites to rest for a while. If, as a new habit, you want to practice walking instead of resting and letting yourself fall in the armchair, Orbell and Verplanken (2010) recommend already in the morning putting sports shoes on the armchair as a reminder. In the coaching session, it is a creative task to find out with the clients which new cues they could choose and try for superimposing the old cues. For many self-disciplined people, a simple appointment entry with a reminder tone in their electronic calendar or a colorful Post-it with a note in the right place may be enough. More motivating can be a picture that is placed with the cue, which allegorically reminds of the goal.

Transfer barriers can block intended changes (Schnieders, 2016), especially the persons in the environment with their expectations and habits.

According to a company survey by Capgemini (2012) on change management, 63.8% of those surveyed believe that previous habits must be overcome. I remember a craftsman in a project group on a planned restructuring of the maintenance department, who stated openly and loudly several times in the group: "I am only here to prevent anything from changing!" It was a difficult task to coach the project manager in communicating the necessity of the changes convincingly, to take the resistance to change seriously and consider them in his change management.

Coaching Methods to Accompany Implementation Processes

Promoting the transfer of what has been learnt into practice is a classic problem of in-company training. Based on methods of *behavior modification* (see chapter "Behavior Modification"), so-called transfer or implementation agreements were already introduced in social skills training seminars in the 1970s. At the end of the seminars, for example, the participants were asked to write down individually, what they intended to change (Semmer & Pfäfflin, 1978, p. 178 f.). In the following two methods especially used in coaching are presented, the *Virtual Transfer Coaching* according to Geißler (2011) and the *Implementation Accompaniment* with shadowing and text messaging according to Greif (2013).

Virtual Transfer Coaching

Geißler (2011) has developed a coaching format that is intended to ensure the transfer of learning following training seminars or coaching. At the beginning, he recommends that a "triangular" agreement on the coaching goals be made between the supervisors, the participants, and the coaches. To save costs, Geißler combines the answering of questions generated by an Internet program with subsequent telephone coaching. In the questions of the program, the planned goals and satisfaction ratings with the current implementation of the planned transfer are assessed using scales (Kreggenfeld & Reckert, 2008). The written form of the answers through the client's input aims to increase commitment and provide an impulse for goal-oriented self-reflection. After this, telephone coaching sessions are conducted.

Sustainable Behavior Changes by Implementation Accompaniment

As an alternative or supplement to virtual transfer coaching, *shadowing* by telephone or online video chats can be used for difficult implementation tasks. The term shadowing originally refers to the observation of learners as they apply what they have learned. In sports, it is a matter of course that the trainer or sports coach observes the athletes in the competition situation. In coaching, shadowing is rather rare, although it is extraordinarily effective according to available experience (for a summary see Greif, 2013).

Since the presence of the coach during the implementation phase is not always possible and very time-consuming, it is advisable to evaluate and support the implementation trials with the clients in a telephone conversation or online video chat. It is not at all new that coaches contact their clients by telephone between sessions to discuss their experiences in achieving their goals. Recommended in

telephone or online shadowing in coaching is that goal clarification, resource activation, and planning as well as will decision precede in a face-to-face coaching or by online video chats as described above in the extended Rubicon model.

The shadowing sessions should be arranged as soon as possible after the implementation trials. This helps that the memories of the implementation situation are still present in the client's mind. In addition, demotivation, which is often strong because experiences of failure, can be quickly intercepted. If the implementation intentions could not be successfully implemented, it is often sufficient to encourage the clients to envision their goal, motto and resources, to imagine the expected positive results, and to re-motivate themselves to try again. In some cases, it may be necessary to clarify and redefine the goals, plans and implementation intentions, and to accompany the trials by shadowing over a longer period.

As soon as the implementation is successful, in longer-term accompaniment of repeated behavior routines and for sustainable behavior changes, it is very efficient to move on to implementation support via text messages, WhatsApp, or email. To ensure that these messages can be sent without effort over a longer period, for example, when changing behavioral habits, it is recommended that these communications are deliberately kept very short. It has proven its practical effectiveness that clients only rate how rigorously the implementation was possible on a scale of 0–10 and send this single figure by text message directly to the coach after the situation, possibly supplemented by short explanatory keywords or a request for a telephone call. It is sufficient if the coaches only react to it now and then with short encouraging comments, if the ratings are high. As the clients comment in their final evaluation of the coaching, they perceive this as important support. Client and coach "stay on" with the implementation until it stabilizes.

In the course of shadowing by telephone, online video chats, and text messages, the coaches are to more and more reduce their support of implementation. They encourage reflection on how the clients have achieved new implementation skills and how they can use them for self-directed transfer to new changes in the future without support by coaching (see phase 4 in Fig. 2).

Perspectives of Research on Bridging the Gap Between Goal and Implementation

As outlined at the beginning, one of the major challenges for science and practice, especially in coaching, is to bridge the gap between goal and the necessary implementation of behavioral changes. It is particularly difficult when the goal is to change a firm habit. The solution is often not, as many believe, to be found simply by clarifying the goal. After clarification of goals, only about 50% implement the behavior necessary for the achievement of the goals, as shown above by numerous studies (Sheeran, 2002). We need more sophisticated combinations of methods that take unpredicted changes and the difficulties of habit changes into account. To

bridge the gap, a wide range of application-oriented findings from recent basic research in motivational psychology and neuroscience can be referred to. Since the findings have been well confirmed in different fields of application, the methods can also be recommended in the coaching field.

The advantage of their application in the coaching field is that the methods presented can be adapted here individually to the person and situation. As a result, even stronger effects can be expected than in the studies on the effectiveness of the methods available to date. So far, however, there are only a few studies in the coaching field. Implementation support seems to be a particularly important phase in this process. Greif and Scheidewig (1998) achieved an observed implementation rate of 100% after training of shift leaders of an internationally leading manufacturer of special paper in two seminars (9 and 11 participants) following a short transfer coaching. According to Geißler (2011), transfer rates of 89% were achieved with three virtual transfer coaching sessions over a period of 10–12 weeks according to the participants' estimates. However, Geißler does not rule out an increase in the rates through social desirability in these assessments and assumes that the "objective" transfer rate is only 70–80%. In a project for customer acquisition in a large bank with over 600 employees with customer contact had to apply a new software tool. We carried out a three-stage coaching concept (goal clarification and planning, formulation of an implementation intention and accompaniment of the implementation by telephone shadowing) based on the extended Rubicon model (Greif & Benning-Rohnke, 2015) in addition to training of employees and clarification of goals in the teams and with their superiors. Customer growth increased by 105% and the profitability rose by 29%. Many participants spontaneously attributed these improvements largely to the support of implementation by coaching. However, the changes observed in the three studies can by no means be clearly attributed to coaching with implementation support, because they lack control groups. In a small pilot study on the effectiveness of coaching with telephone shadowing with 18 students of a part-time coaching master's course at the EuroFH Hamburg, a highly significant difference of 16% was found in the implementation of the goals after coaching, as estimated by the clients, with an average of 91% goal achievement compared to the randomly separated goals without coaching support (Leder, 2013). Two coaching studies at the Universities of Bochum and Hamburg, Germany ($N = 27$ and 22) tested the effectiveness of the combined methods for the implementation of learning plans for exams. Significant and strong effect strengths in comparison to the waiting groups (implementation rates $d = 1.98$ and 0.77; goal attainment $d = 0.97$ and 0.74) showed that the methods are very useful (Greif, 2020). The effects found in all studies so far are very promising. However, further research with professional coaches and randomized control groups is necessary to clearly verify whether and to what extent coaching with these coaching methods can contribute to bridge the gap between goals and implementation.

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Motivational Interviewing as a Tool for Coaching in the Workplace: Coaching for Organizational Change

Amelie V. Güntner, Simone Kauffeld, and Jonathan Passmore

Case Study

Susan leads a small division, with a global organization. She has been charged with delivering change in response to the senior team's analysis of changing customer needs. Susan was unconvinced change was needed. She decided the best option was to demonstrate to the senior team her strategy was right, and the decline in sales was a double quarter blip. The third-quarter figures were no different and showed continued decline. A coach was brought in to work with Susan, with a specific brief of helping Susan explore the market and to support her align her business activities with the corporate strategy. Unsurprisingly Susan was reluctant to make a change.

Motivating for Change in Organizations

Developing the motivation for making a change is easier said than done. Should I really go for the change? Do I really want it and is it worth the efforts? Basic questions like these often come to mind when individuals find themselves

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confronted with change. Change is frequently associated with motion and progress (Heckhausen, 1977). That is true for people's private life, where change plays an important role. People want to engage in physical activity (e.g., Hardcastle et al., 2013), quit smoking (e.g., Hettema & Hendricks, 2010), and lose weight (e.g., Armstrong et al., 2011). These challenges are also applicable to the organizational context. Today's working environment, characterized by continuous change regarding technologies, digitization, customer needs, societal values, and political or legal measures, forces organizations to make permanent adjustments if they are to stay competitive (Leana & Barry, 2000; Stouten et al., 2018).

To successfully deal with the frequency in which organizations are confronted with change, employees, as the targets of change, have been identified as highly impactful on organizational changes (Bormann & Rowold, 2016; Oreg et al., 2011). Specifically, because employees are the ones asked to put planned change into action, their response to change, such as their motivation for change, is crucial for the successful change implementation (Kim et al., 2011; Van den Heuvel et al., 2010; Woodman & Dewett, 2004). Common arguments in favor of change are easy to see from the bigger picture at the organizational level: bigger, farther, fitter. In most cases, however at the individual level, employees' attitude towards change is more complex. Oftentimes, employees hold opinions both in favor of change as well as against change (Piderit, 2000). They see the potential benefits when participating in the change (e.g., acquiring new skills, but they also value the status quo (e.g., being experienced in what they do). This state in which individuals hold two concurring motivations simultaneously is called ambivalence (Miller & Rollnick, 2013). While this state is natural, it can lead to an internal conflict in which employees becoming stuck and unable to change. For successful implementation of change, employees need their ambivalence to be resolved so that they can develop the motivation to change (Passmore, 2007). As part of most employees' ambivalence, they may express reasons against the change, which leaders may perceive as resistance. Symptoms of resistance are manifold and show themselves, for example, in negativity, complaining, and even absence. Employees might feel that the effort-reward ratio is not sufficient, discipline is lacking, or people fear possible individual losses during the change process (Oreg et al., 2011). Accordingly, the change process stands and falls with employees' motivation for the change goal.

Because it is oftentimes leaders who are tasked with executing and leading the change, it is also their challenge to motivate employees for change (Oreg & Berson, 2019). Hence, leaders need to be equipped with the necessary communication skills that help them increase their employees'motivation for change (Grant & Hartley, 2013). Coaching as a person-related approach can be used to accompany employees with the change process. Coaching of individuals and groups includes the improvement of the client's goal achievements as well as self-change and self-development (Greif, 2008). One specific style of communication within counseling that especially focuses on ambivalence that accompanies the change process is the communication approach of Motivational Interviewing (MI; Miller & Rollnick, 2013).

Origins and Theoretical Background of MI

MI was introduced by William R. Miller and Stephen Rollnick in the field of substance abuse (Miller & Rollnick, 1991). They define the essence of MI as follows: "MI is a collaborative, goal-oriented style of communication with particular attention to the language of change. It is designed to strengthen personal motivation for and commitment to a specific goal by eliciting and exploring the person's own reasons for change within an atmosphere of acceptance and compassion" (Miller & Rollnick, 2013, p. 29). Originating from alcohol and drug therapy, MI was developed to decrease patients' addiction behavior (Miller & Rollnick, 2013). Importantly, the founders of MI assume that clients in substance abuse treatment are not unmotivated, but "ambivalent" toward change (Miller & Rollnick, 2002). Consequently, the main goal of MI is to help clients overcome the ambivalence that keeps them from making desired changes in their life (Miller & Rollnick, 2002).

Miller and Rollnick (2013) describe MI as a "bottom-up" process that was originally shaped by practical experience in the field of alcohol treatment. It was only after MI became more prominent that researchers drew lines to additional existing theories to underpin the theoretical background of MI (e.g., Markland et al., 2005).

One important theory that is often connected to MI is the Self-Determination Theory (SDT, Deci & Ryan, 1985; Ryan & Deci, 2000). It is a theory of motivation and personality (Ryan & Deci, 2000) emphasizing the importance of people's growth tendencies and their innate psychological needs in determining self-motivation and personality integration. According to SDT, individual motivation is composed of three elements essential for personal growth: competence, relatedness, and autonomy (Ryan & Deci, 2000; see also chapter: Motivation, Volition and Implementation). Each of the three basic psychological needs suggested by SDT is taken up and supported by MI practices, while particular emphasis is put on individuals' perceived autonomy. SDT proposes that when an individual experiences autonomy-restriction, he/she may not seek behavior change (Ryan & Deci, 2008). This assumption is underpinned by an extensive series of empirical investigations showing that environmental events which support autonomy and promote competence tend to facilitate intrinsically motivated behavior (Deci & Ryan, 1985). MI can be understood as providing an autonomy-supportive atmosphere that helps clients to find their internal source of motivation. Autonomy is supported by nondirective inquiry and reflection. Furthermore, competence is fostered through giving information, and relatedness is represented by a relationship of unconditional positive regard (Ryan & Deci, 2008). To this day, a large amount of meta-analyses has proven the effectiveness of MI interventions for the clinical setting (e.g., Hettema et al., 2005; Magill et al., 2014).

Another theory that underpins the concept MI and, hence, can be integrated very well into the MI framework is the Transtheoretical Model (TTM) of Change (Prochaska & DiClemente, 1982), which was developed in the context of clinical and health psychology. Similar to the concept of MI, the TTM assumes that people

embark on change with different levels of readiness. Specifically, the TTM suggests that different stages of change are connected with different levels of readiness to change. As such, each of these stages relates to specific cognitions that involve the perceived costs and benefits of the target behavior. The authors suggest five stages that people go through: Precontemplation, contemplation, preparation, action, and preservation. In the precontemplation stage, individuals lack information or do not feel capable to change, and hence, have no intention to change. This stage is followed by the contemplation stage in which individuals form intentions. At this stage, individuals experience ambivalence, which is considered a normal part of the change process (Miller & Rollnick, 1991). However, individuals often remain stuck in this state of ambivalence and find themselves unable to make any decision at all. MI is said to be particularly suitable for individuals who locate themselves in one of the first two stages of the TTM, that is, who consider themselves ambivalent. Using MI can help to create a discrepancy between an individuals' current behavior and their values and goals (Miller & Rollnick, 1991). Doing so can reinforce individuals' internal reasons for change, which causes a shift of motivation in the intrinsic direction (Vansteenkiste & Sheldon, 2006). If individuals have made the decision to change, they find themselves in the preparation stage, in which they make clear plans for how to implement the change. The concrete steps toward change are taken in the action stage. If the new change behavior is maintained over a certain period of time, individuals move into the maintenance stage. Most people relapse as they go through the different stages, because the process of change is not linear but rather follows a spiral pattern (Prochaska & DiClemente, 1982). The TTM can, for example, be used by leaders to structure change-related conversations with their employees.

Key Components of MI

MI Spirit

MI is based on the principles of client-centered therapy (Rogers, 1951) and combines relational (e.g., therapeutic empathy and respect for client autonomy) and technical (e.g., open questions, simple and complex reflections) elements (Miller & Rollnick, 2013). The aim of MI is to establish a safe, exploratory atmosphere wherein clients feel free to verbalize personal values, capacities, and reasons regarding their ambivalence and behavior change. Figure 1 shows the different components of MI. The MI spirit represents the relational element and is seen as the most important aspect of MI, influencing every other component of the process. Miller and Rollnick (2013) describe the MI spirit as the underlying perspective that drives the whole process. It is characterized by four interrelated key elements: partnership, acceptance, compassion, and evocation. Partnership is represented by a collaborative approach, where the coach invites the client to explore positive as well as negative aspects of his/her behavior (Miller & Rollnick, 2002). An important aspect of partnership is the
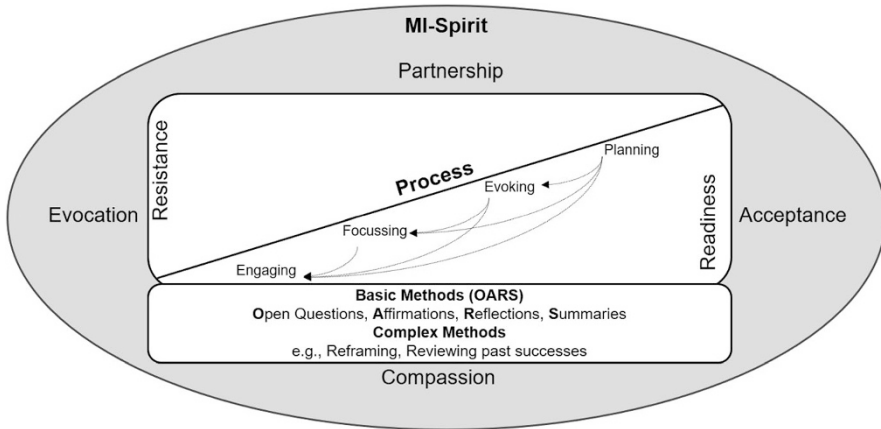
Fig. 1 MI communication approach including the MI spirit, MI process, and MI communication methods (Endrejat & Güntner, 2019)

coach's attitude of profound acceptance that appreciates the client as he/she is (Miller & Rollnick, 2013). The aspect of compassion aims "[...]to actively promote the other's welfare, to give priority to the other's needs" (Miller & Rollnick, 2013, p. 20). The spirit of evocation is closely related to the concept of ambivalence. The goal is to evoke and strengthen the client's change motives and reasons that are already present (Miller & Rollnick, 2013). Besides, MI pursues two main goals: facilitating motivation toward change and converting this motivation into commitment to specific goals, plans, and changes. These goals are based on the four core principles, namely engaging, focusing, evoking, and planning. Here, change is seen as a decision-making process that requires reflection from the client before the actual change planning process can be initiated (Miller & Rollnick, 2013).

Communication Methods

To convert the basic principles of MI into action, basic and complex methods are formulated (see Fig. 1). MI's basic communication methods are compiled under the acronym OARS (i.e., open questions, affirmations, reflections, and summaries; Miller & Rollnick, 2013). Behind OARS stands the idea that MI-practitioners navigate a skiff and therefore use OARS as tool to explore clients' ambivalence (Klonek & Kauffeld, 2015).

First, both open-ended questions and reflective listening originate from Rogers' (1951) person-centered communication approach. Using open-ended questions gives leaders the opportunity to elicit employees' reasons for behavior change and help employees explore potential benefits the change might hold. Also, by using open-ended questions, contrary to closed questions, leaders can more easily

stimulate a flowing conversation with the employee. Second, leaders can make use of reflective listening to encourage mutual understanding (Passmore, 2013a). Reflections, meaning repeating or paraphrasing what a conversational partner said, serve as a means for leaders to express their empathy toward employees (Rogers, 1951). Third, another basic method of MI lies in the use of affirmations to acknowledge employees' personal strengths and previous steps they might have taken in the direction of change and to build employees' self-efficacy regarding further change measures. Finally, the OARS are completed by the skill of summarizing, a form of reflective listening, which can be used to review the conversation at the end or to proceed from one topic to another within the conversation.

Additionally, MI offers more complex communication methods which, among others, can be used to foster clients' confidence towards change (Passmore, 2012a), for example, when it comes to the planning of concrete steps in the direction of change (see Fig. 1 for examples or Miller and Rollnick (2013) for the full range of methods) through exploring the focus of the conversation (2013a), typical client experiences (2012b) and through exploring the arguments in favor and against change (2011b).

Using MI for Coaching in the Workplace

Providing Employees with Guidance in the Direction of Change

MI as "one of the most rigorously tested approaches to helping people grow, change, and develop" (Anstiss & Passmore, 2013, p. 340) and having its roots in the clinical context (Miller, 1983) has increasingly spread over the years and is now frequently applied beyond where it originates from. MI methods have been applied across the fields of careers counselling (e.g., Klonek et al., 2016), careers coaching (Passmore, 2007; Passmore & Whybrow, 2019; Stoltz & Young, 2013), unemployment (e.g., Britt et al., 2018), environmental behavior (e.g., Forsberg et al., 2014; Klonek et al., 2015a), or as an approach in change management (Güntner et al., 2019). For example, research conducted in the context of organizational change showed that employees who received three MI sessions scored higher on their readiness to change compared to an experimental control group (Grimolizzi-Jensen, 2018). Similarly, a study by Endrejat & Kauffeld (2018) compared an MI-based workshop on energy-saving to a lecture-based intervention showing that only the workshop led to an increase in participants' change readiness and self-reported energy-saving behavior. Thus, MI is assumed to be a communication method suitable to organizations and their members move in the direction of change.

As it becomes apparent, MI shows many parallels to existing coaching approaches (Passmore, 2014). Coaching and MI aim to support people in planning and implementing positive changes (Miller & Rollnick, 2013). However, while more traditional coaching approaches (e.g., person-centered therapy) have a clear open-ended focus, MI is more goal-related and has a strong facilitative nature (Passmore,

2007, 2014). MI suggests that, instead of focusing on problems, a leader should direct employees' attention toward possible solutions and the benefits of a change. To this end, MI puts particular emphasis on clients' language and emphasizes the assumption that readiness towards change is created by communication (Klonek et al., 2015a). Specifically, change-related utterances on behalf of the client are elicited by the evocative behavior of the coach.

MI's Emphasis on Change-Related Language

According to MI, individuals who are ambivalent towards a change have a voice that speaks in favor of change and a voice that struggles with change (Glynn & Moyers, 2010; Miller & Rollnick, 2013). Every utterance by the client that speaks in favor of change is labeled change talk (e.g., personal motives to change, ability to change), whereas utterances speaking against change are labeled sustain talk (e.g., reasons against change; inability to change; Glynn & Moyers, 2010). MI suggests that the extent to which clients use language in favor or against change can inform about their readiness or resistance to change. The underlying idea is that language shapes reality, meaning that employees who hear themselves argue in favor of a change are more likely to develop a positive attitude toward the change (Bem, 1972). Thus, employees should be encouraged to "do the work" by providing the reasons for change and "talk themselves into the change" (Miller & Rose, 2009). Building upon this assumption, MI formulates a technical hypothesis regarding the efficacy of MI: proficient use of MI does increase clients' in-session change talk and decreases their sustained talk, which in turn will predict behavior change (Miller & Rose, 2009).

Thus, the aim of MI is to elicit clients' change talk (Moyers & Martin, 2006), thereby promoting their motivation for change. For example, leaders can use reflective listening to steer the conversation in a desired direction toward behavior change (Passmore, 2011a, 2011b). That is, if the employee gets caught in a spiral of sustain talk (e.g., continuously naming reasons against the change), the leader can choose to primarily reflect employees' change talk, thereby emphasizing and strengthening the statements that are in favor of change. Likewise, leaders can choose to primarily formulate questions that ask for employees' change talk (e.g., "What would help you making the change?") instead of getting stuck in questions that provoke sustain talk (e.g., "What hinders you from making the change?"). Importantly, leaders should be aware that solely reflecting change talk and asking for clients' reasons to change, maybe perceived by employees' as little empathic. Therefore, leaders should give their employees the space to express their sustained talk, particularly at the beginning of the conversation, to make sure that their employees feel understood and heard. As the conversation continues, leaders may consider putting more focus on employees' change talk. That said, by using reflective listening, leaders can provide their employees with guidance toward a change-related goal, while preserving their employees' need for autonomy (Güntner et al., 2019; see Passmore (2013b) for a discussion on ethics in MI).

Using MI for Change at the Individual and Group Level

Nowadays, organizations have widely recognized the need and advantages associated with the involvement of their members in organizational processes, such as organizational change projects. To offer a more refined picture of how MI can be applied as a coaching method in the context of change at the workplace, we describe two examples of how MI can be used in dyadic social interactions and in groups.

Leaders are regularly tasked to get together with their employees to evaluate their performance and plan the attainment of new goals. Such conversations usually take place at the dyadic level, for example, during appraisal interviews. It is during these conversations that leaders can function as coaches when trying to guide their employees toward performance improvement, which likely requires some form of behavior change from employees. Before getting to the point of talking about behavior change, leaders usually start appraisal interviews by reviewing employees' achieved goals and offering feedback to employees. Importantly, and in line with the MI approach, leaders should pay attention to deliver feedback in an empathic and autonomy-supportive manner and try not to dominate the interview (Meinecke & Kauffeld, 2019). For example, when giving feedback on employees' performance achievements, leaders should refrain from making reproaches for missed goals in a confrontative manner, since employees may perceive this as a threat and respond with reactance (Klonek et al., 2014). Instead, leaders may try to create a trustworthy and collaborative atmosphere that gives employees the opportunity to open up toward their leader. Specifically, leaders can use reflections to express understanding and use change-evoking questions to encourage their employees to actively participate in the conversation and share their points of view. In applying MI, leaders may more easily let go of most of the speaking time and instead let employees elaborate on their desires and concerns regarding their work goals and personal development. Furthermore, when the conversation focuses on the planning of new goals, leaders should establish a solution focus that helps employees on looking forward instead of mourning about failures of their past. To do so, leaders can rely on MI methods that aim to strengthen employees' self-efficacy (e.g., exploring own resources). Furthermore, independent of the specific topic of the conversation between a leader and his/her employee, leaders are well-advised of using the basic MI methods to establish a collaborative and accepting atmosphere that may help improve the leader-follower relationship overall.

In addition to the idea of change-related conversations at the individuals level, one must consider that most change projects usually take place at a level that requires not only individuals'motivation for change, but the motivation of a whole group of employees. Therefore, it is often neither economical (i.e., regarding resources such as time and money needed) nor useful (i.e., in terms of reaching the change goal) to talk to each employee one-on-one. Instead, involving a group of employees in the decision-making process on the implementation of subsequent change measures (Endrejat et al., 2015), also consider that employees do not operate in a vacuum, but that they are embedded within a social system (e.g., Kozlowski, 2015). With

respect to organizational change, this implies that an employee's motivation is influenced by how they perceive their co-workers' levels of motivation. Thus, leaders who are tasked to motivate their work group for change need to consider not only how single individuals respond to change, but also they need to pay attention to social influence processes taking place at the group level. Such social influence processes (e.g., emerging during change-related meetings or workshops) hold the potential for employees to motivate each other, but also hold the risk of employees sparking resistance towards change. Regarding the latter, groups of employees may talk themselves into motivational downward spirals by verbalizing resistance and collectively arguing against the change. At this point, employees may also use killer phrases such as "we'll never make it," expressing little confidence in their ability to change (see Kauffeld & Lehmann-Willenbrock, 2012).

Keeping in mind such (negative) influence processes and subsequent conversation traps when working with groups makes motivating them particularly challenging and complex. In dealing with these challenges, leaders may benefit from using MI. Originally developed and still widely used for dyadic interactions, MI is slowly finding its way to the group context, both in clinical settings (Wagner & Ingersoll, 2013) as well as in organizational change settings (Güntner et al., 2019). For example, leaders may use MI methods to minimize employees' sustained talk which otherwise may likely be contagious and elicit more sustained talk in other co-workers. Instead, leaders would want to use methods (e.g., change talk-evoking questions and reflections) to encourage employees to express change talk (e.g., naming reasons), which in turn may trigger their co-workers to voice statements in favor of change, too (Endrejat et al., 2020).

Importantly, leaders want to ensure that their work group sees change not only as a viable option, but also that its members are committed toward the change (de Shazer & Dolan, 2007). In respect to change-related group meetings or workshops, this implies that leaders use communication methods that trigger employees to express their desires, abilities, and reasons to change (i.e., preparatory change talk), but also their commitment, activation, and ideas for the next steps to take (i.e., mobilizing change talk; Miller & Rollnick, 2013).

In this respect, leaders can use MI methods to help employees develop an action plan and define concrete change measures including concrete specifications of when and where they take place and who is responsible for the respective task. The latter, that is defining responsibilities, is especially important in cases where a work group as a whole is affected by change, because the risk of diffusion of responsibility is high.

Teaching MI in Organizations

MI Training

Although the basic principles of MI (e.g., communicating empathically using open questions and reflections) may sound intuitive and easy to implement, using these methods in real-life conversations with employees and co-workers requires training and considerable practice. MI is not a basic coaching model, but one best reserved for experienced practitioners. Accordingly, organizations interested in implementing MI in their working routines need to consider offering structured training programs that teach the core components of MI. Specifically, we propose that these trainings do not only teach individuals how to communicate in an empathic and autonomy-supportive way, but also to restrain from using controlling behaviors, which are likely to elicit employees' resistance to change (Klonek et al., 2014). Furthermore, while we focused on the leader as the person responsible for communicating the change, the notion that change takes place in social systems also entails that employees themselves may function as change agents (i.e., multipliers of change; By, 2005). As previous research on MI in the group context showed, employees who verbalize statements in favor of change may trigger their co-workers to express similar statements (Endrejat et al., 2020). Therefore, and because communication is always a two-way process, we propose that employees should also be trained in MI to communicate more effectively.

Because MI has a long evidence-based research tradition, a wealth of training studies exist that have evaluated the impact of MI training on participants' communication skills. The majority of training studies originate from the clinical context and show that even relatively short MI trainings (e.g., 2 days) can significantly improve trainees' communication skills (de Roten et al., 2013). These findings are supported in the non-clinical context, for example, in a study by Klonek and Kauffeld (2015) using a sample of engineering students.

Measuring MI Proficiency

When the aim is to integrate MI in the organizational context and make it part of leadership trainings, organizations should ensure to implement subsequent quality assessments of MI. To assess leaders' MI proficiency, one can choose from different several different approaches. One possibility is to directly interrogate the leader on how he/she evaluates his/her performance himself/herself (self-assessment). In fact, a remarkable amount of quality assessment turns out to be limited to the answering of a questionnaire but is of debatable validity when it comes to behavior in real-world situations (Baumeister et al., 2007). Usually, questionnaires ask people to report what they have done, will do, or would do and why they do it. In recent years, doubts on the validity and results of self-reports have been raised and the call for

field observations has increased. Studies on forecasting behavior systematically show that people's predictions about how they will react and feel are inaccurate (e.g., Nisbett & Wilson, 1977; Wilson & Gilbert, 2003). Such inaccuracy means that self-reports of past behaviors, hypothetical future behaviors, or causes of behavior are not as valid as they are sometimes claimed to be (Baumeister et al., 2007). The strongest criticism, however, is that self-assessments are milder and especially self-serving compared to being evaluated by others (Thornton, 1980). This criticism is supported by a large amount of empirical evidence including reviews as well as meta-analyses indicating that self-assessments are more self-serving than external assessments by others (e.g., Harris & Schaubroeck, 1988; Heidemeier, 2005; Mabe & West, 1982; Valle & Bozeman, 2002). Therefore, external assessment through behavioral observation methods may be a more reliable and thus recommendable way for evaluating MI proficiency. Compared to self-report via questionnaires, behavioral analysis represents the objective reality more accurately and is robust against observer errors (e.g., social desirability and memory effects; Baumeister et al., 2007). Due to the fact that interaction analysis utilizes digitalized material, sequences of interest can be rewatched and paused and sequential information can be gathered automatically during the process (Bakeman & Quera, 2011; Klonek et al., 2015b). Thus, we propose behavior analysis as a well-fitting method of external assessment to adequately depicture the MI proficiency of leaders (and employees).

Conclusion

In returning to our case of Susan the coach avoided focusing on helping Susan raise her skills using a behavioral approach, or exploring her faulty thinking using a cognitive approach, and a systemic approach. Susan's challenge was about her motivation to change. Instruction from top-down leaders was not enough. Susan needed to believe in her heart a change to the product line was needed, before she was able to express her commitment toward the change. By listening and reflecting, and thus expressing understanding and empathy, the coach was able to help build a relationship of trust with Susan. From there the coach encouraged Susan to explore the option of staying with his current product line and of making a change. Critical information in this process was the views of customers, stakeholders, and organizational data trends. However, most importantly was Susan's desire to do the right thing for her team and her customers. Using tools such as decisional balance and through evoking change talk, Susan's position gradually moved during quarter four to a full-blooded commitment to reorganizing her product line, acknowledging that her one priority was to meet customer needs and protect her workforce.

   MI can offer coaches a powerful tool for supporting change, but only when delivered with highly skilled and experienced coaches, who understand both the underlying principles of MI, the range of tools within the framework, and who work in an ethical and collaborative way with the client to help the client explore their

ambivalence (resistance) and connect with their personal values, to provide the motivation for change.

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The Organizational Context in Coaching

Astrid Schreyögg

A Practical Example

Simon, a 55-year-old mechanical engineer, was urgently advised by his supervisor to seek coaching because he was unusually weak in communication among the company's other top managers. In the coaching sessions, he also appeared very quiet and downright bleak at first. After a thorough reconstruction, the following was found: Simon was originally the only top manager of a globally operating company for the sale and installation of forges. About 20 months ago, his company had been sold to a larger one. After this acquisition, his entire professional life *darkened*, he said. He complained above all that now, in contrast to the past, a department of business people was responsible for all his offers, planning and calculations. Whereas he used to be able to carry out these tasks independently, he now had to wait for the approval of these *business people.* According to his impression, however, they delayed all his transactions, so that he saw himself and his department sabotaged. "They always prefer the papers of those others in the company they've always worked for. Mine always come last," it broke out of him angrily. In the coaching it now became clear that through the takeover of his company he had not only lost part of his functions and thus part of his independence; now it also became clear that *these business people* appeared to him like an enemy front, which in his opinion sabotaged him as an *intruder.* In further meetings, it was possible to establish that the new, larger company already had a stronger division of labor with higher specialization, so that it had separated economic from technical tasks for reasons of efficiency or had outsourced economic matters to a central department. The business people were, therefore, active not only for his, for the forging sector, but also for other product areas such as strip steel machinery, etc. It also became clear

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that Simon found communication with the business people extremely strange. The *way they talk*, he said. He found *these people to be hard to get used to, so that*, for example in the canteen, he never *sat down at the same table with "them."* Now it became clear that not only had the culture of the business people or their manners remained alien to him, but that he had made no attempt whatsoever to approach them personally, to get to know them, but also to let himself be introduced to them. When Simon had understood the formal as well as the non-formal aspects relevant to his new position, his mood brightened almost immediately. *Yeah, but what can I do?* he said. Thereupon, the coaching helped to work out how he could take the new situation into account in his behavior: namely, to invest much more time and energy in improving his relationships with the new interaction partners and thus to get to know their patterns of thought and action, as well as to get to know himself. He purposefully implemented these recommendations, so that he felt more satisfied at his workplace again in the time that followed.

Scientifically Founded Theories/Systematizations

Organization is used today as an instrumental and institutional term. From an instrumental perspective, it is a matter of *organizing* that an event, for example, has been well *managed.* In contrast, the institutional concept refers to a formally structural system of action such as a bank or a kindergarten (Schreyögg & Geiger, 2016). This chapter will primarily deal with organizations in an institutional sense.

Since the clients in coaching as a form of consultancy for specialists and managers are almost always members of an organization, i.e., of an institutionalized system of action, this usually also forms the structural context of their professional activities. That is why organizations usually provide the background for coaching. In coaching, therefore, all client activities must be analyzed and worked through based on the respective organization.

However, the clients come from very different types of organizations. Whereas in the past they used to belong mainly to corporations, often even large stock corporations (Böning, 2005), today they are often family businesses (Seewald, 2015), public authorities (e.g., Westerwelle, 2004), or social service systems such as clinics or advice centers. In addition, they also belong to clubs, associations, or non-profits such as churches, trade unions, or political parties.

The starting point of the organizational debate was the bureaucracy model of Weber (1921). Initially, it only included the study of formal patterns. However non-formal organizational phenomena increasingly became the focus of interest. According to relevant authors, all these patterns form the basis for considering any type of organization (Schreyögg & Geiger, 2016).

Concepts for Formal Organizational Patterns

At the beginning of the twentieth century, Max Weber investigated the question of how power is exercised in modern times. He postulated that, in contrast to pre-modern societies with their traditional forms of rule, where aristocratic persons always dominated, in the industrial age domination was increasingly perceived as structural and largely independent of persons. As a *bureaucratic model*, Weber described a specific type of social system with the following characteristics (Mayntz, 1968):

- It is based on the *division of labor*, i.e., each member has fixed duties and decision-making powers, which can vary considerably.
- The system has what is known as an *official hierarchy* with superiors and subordinates who must ensure the coordination of the units that share the workload. The job holders have defined powers of instruction from top to bottom. While there are defined appeal or complaint channels from the bottom up.
- In addition to the hierarchical configuration of jobs, there are so-called *staff positions* or entire *staff departments*, which serve to support the formal hierarchical structure, such as personnel or marketing departments.
- The fulfillment of tasks by all members of the organization is *standardized*, i.e., it takes place according to established rules.
- These and all other activities are fixed *and documented on file.*

This type of organization should ideally have a firmly established formal internal structure comparable to a well-oiled machine, which guarantees the best possible achievement of objectives. An organization, therefore, consists of a configuration of jobs for which suitable people are then recruited. However, these persons are in principle considered interchangeable. This type still determines in its basic features the design of organizations today. At the end of the twentieth and beginning of the twenty-first century, however, two problems were increasingly addressed:

- From a *pragmatic point of view*, pronounced bureaucracies, i.e., those with many rules, proved to be inefficient, because all processes are too unwieldy, too time-consuming.
- From an *anthropological point of view*, highly formalized systems were considered to be less digestible for humans. Here they feel unfree as in a Procrustean bed (Argyris, 1975).

Many organizations have been less formalized, particularly for reasons of greater efficiency. In a modern understanding of organizational theory, therefore, one no longer strives for the pure bureaucratic type, but rather more flexible designs. De facto today we increasingly find organizations, as project organizations, with relatively flat hierarchies in which the hierarchical coordination is largely compensated for by forms of self-organization of the organization members (Schreyögg & Geiger, 2016).

Since the 1970s, empirical organizational research has aimed to discover the determinants of organizational structure variables originally borrowed from the bureaucratic model, such as the degree of specialization, standardization, etc. The studies show that, in addition to the objectives, the size of an organization is particularly important for its degree of formalization. The larger an organization is, the more comprehensive and diverse are the planned regulations (Pugh & Hickson, 1968).

Concepts of Non-formal Organizational Patterns

In recent decades, organizational researchers have increasingly turned their attention to non-formal patterns of organizations. In other words, the Weberian machine model was more and more questioned, and the organization was understood as a living social system, which can also be understood as a processual phenomenon.

Concepts on Informal Structural Phenomena

As early as the end of the 1930s, occupational scientists discovered that the performance of employees could vary considerably due to different social conditions. While the original intention in an industrial company was to determine under which lighting conditions the workers performed particularly well, it was found that they worked even in almost total darkness even better than their colleagues. The researchers then assumed that the high performance was primarily due to the special attention given to them by the researchers (Roethlisberger & Dickson, 1939). This is regarded as the birth of engagement with informal organizational patterns. First, it was about emotional relationships between the members of the organization, their likes and dislikes. However, the generalizing hypothesis that external support with the consequence of intensified group cohesion is essential for high group performance proved untenable in the following period. Likert was able to show that a high level of work performance is in principle dependent on the standards that are formed within a working group. And these standards can be quite hostile to performance.

Inspired by Lewin and his school, the group dynamics movement increasingly focused on *informal organization*. While the formal structure is generally regarded as consciously planned regulation for the purpose of fulfilling tasks, the informal structure, on the other hand, unfolds emergently according to the emotional impulses of the organizational members of the organization, their personal wishes, feelings of sympathy, etc. It can be regarded as a *natural*, group dynamic structure that develops in every organization or organizational unit with a manageable membership. Specific role patterns with their own communication and authority relationships as well as their own norms and standards develop within it (Bachmann, 2015). Informal groups

are networked in larger organizations. This amounts eventually to *informal organizations*. Bales (1950) could show in early studies that in the course of a longer group process an emotional leader always emerges in relation to the formal leader. Groups without a formal structure regularly develop dual leadership roles: a social-emotional leader and a task-leader. The social leader is formed in the group as a *dear sweetheart* who comforts and supports, while the task leader initiates structures, helps to avoid chaos, and has a de-escalating effect. Informal group formation also includes the development of a status structure, i.e., an evaluation ranking of all jobs and persons. However, informal group formation in organizations is also always influenced by formal conditions. For example, the selection of personnel is only in exceptional cases at the discretion of the other members of the organization but is determined by the requirements of the organization.

Luhmann (1964) postulated that the formal and the informal structure are in a complementary relationship. For example, dysfunctional aspects of formal leadership would be compensated by informal leadership phenomena. Selvini-Palazzoli et al. (1985) on the other hand claim that informal structural patterns can also prove to be dysfunctional. If, for example, in a production plant, the instructions of the new head of the production department are constantly being contradicted by the informal leader of the workforce, a variety of coordination problems with corresponding frictional losses would arise.

Examining the relationship between formal and informal structures, more closely, it becomes obvious that the emergence and nature of an informal structure must be seen in direct relation to the planned one (Luhmann, 1964). For example, the likelihood of it becoming more pronounced varies with the extent of all the regulations in an organization. Experience has shown that the more formalized the structure of an organization as a whole, the more prominent the informal structure is. Thus, in highly bureaucratic enterprises, we can regularly observe dynamic informal systems, which then compensate for dysfunctional over-formalization and the implied immobility of the system. Conversely, however, we can also observe that institutions lacking any formalization, such as start-ups or alternative social services, develop expansive informal systems. Their function could be explained by the fact that they stabilize the situation, which is not clearly regulated. From a functionalistic-sociological point of view, the importance of informal systems thus lies in compensating dysfunctional phenomena resulting from formal specifications in a *hidden way*.

Following Luhmann, Kühl (2011) emphasizes that every formal organization is characterized by a variety of informal patterns, or rather that it is only through these that it becomes functional in the first place. In an organization where *call of duty* would be the *norm*, i.e., where all the rules are followed exactly, everything would be extremely slow. For this reason, the members of the organization repeatedly revise or undermine formal patterns to reach a better performance. Kühl differentiates different variants of the informal, e.g., legal and illegal, but also non-useful and *useful*, i.e., purposeful forms of informal patterns of action. Typical examples of *useful illegality are*, for example, often illustrated in crime series on television. In

many cases, the main protagonist as a detective was only able to catch the perpetrators through his own breaches of the law.

The Organizational Culture Concept

In the early 1980s, another type of informal organizational pattern emerged that has gained enormous popularity to this day. Peters and Waterman (1983) introduced the construct of *corporate culture* in their book *In Search of Excellence*. The authors focus on collective systems of meaning that organizations develop, quasi as miniature societies, through the daily interactions of their members. This concept of culture is not the European concept of culture in the sense of beautiful literature, etc., but rather the cultural-anthropological term *culture* as it is used in the Anglo-American world. Edgar Schein (1995), a US-American social psychologist, was one of the first scientists to take up the debate and proposed to systematize *organizational culture* with the help of the cultural-anthropological concept of Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck (1961) differentiate three levels. These levels range from features that can only be accessed in an interpretative way to those that can easily be seen:

- The starting point of the model is that so-called *basic assumptions*, i.e., certain world views and anthropological premises, are formed in every organizational system. They include assumptions about the organizational environment, human relations, human attitudes, etc. They are difficult for an observer to access.
- These anthropological premises form the background for *values and standards of behavior* of the members of the organization. They contain rules and prohibitions that every member of the organization follows in one way or another. This group of patterns also manifests itself in a way that is difficult for an external observer to grasp.
- Behavioral standards and value orientations, however, are manifested in a *system of symbols* that manifests itself in observable artifacts and rituals. These are certain forms of language, rituals of greeting, unspoken dress codes, etc., but also myths, stories, and legends that circulate among the employees. Only these aspects can be directly observed.

In the analysis of a culture, a thorough examination of the symbol system is followed by an analysis of the norms and standards. In a third step, one surfaces the basic assumptions underlying the activity system. The special nature of a culture is determined by its founders, its founding history, the goals of the organization, the environment, the industry, etc. (Schein, 1995). Contrary to the original ideas, which were based on the homogeneity of a culture in organizations, in recent years it has been postulated that two or more cultural patterns can often be identified.

In contrast to the original assumption of Peters and Waterman (1983), who considered organizations with strong, i.e., distinct and homogeneous cultures to be particularly effective, this assertion must also be put into perspective today (Schreyögg & Geiger, 2016). Organizations that have developed very homogeneous

and concise cultures prove to be very efficient and successful but they are at the same time extremely inflexible in changing environmental conditions or in other cases where organizational changes are necessary.

Organizational Process Models

Since the late 1970s, organizational theorists have become increasingly interested in the dynamics of organizations and their specific procedural implications. One of the pivotal assumptions of organizational process models is that organizations, regardless of their specific objectives in analogy to organisms, go through certain life cycles (Türk, 1989). Various authors) found that they are characterized by typical requirements and crises. In these models (Greiner, 1972, the following phases are generally distinguished:

- *The pioneer phase*: The pioneer phase, i.e., the founding stage, is usually closely linked to the personality of the pioneer. The latter usually leads the employees in an authoritative and improvising manner. In these early stages, the relationships among employees and those with stakeholders, such as clients, customers, etc. are usually direct and familiar. Typical crisis phenomena at the end of this phase are usually caused by growth in size, broadening of the product range, or other determinants that increase the complexity of the organization. Whenever the organization grows and internal processes become more complex, the anonymity of relationships increases both internally and externally. In this situation, founders often become overstrained with their previous management style. There are constantly problems with deadlines or coordination. According to relevant authors, such crisis phenomena initiate structural changes, which are implemented either as planned organizational change or as intuitively developed measures.
- *The differentiation phase*: In the next phase, a formal reorganization of the organization takes place. Activities and relationships are formally restructured according to their respective task complexity and abundance. This phase is characterized by task specialization and standardization as well as the hierarchization of the staff. The end of the differentiation phase is heralded when the organization threatens to suffocate in increasing regulatory regimes, when horizontal and vertical communications no longer run spontaneously and smoothly when conflicts over formal regulations accumulate and all individual actions are poorly coordinated. In such a situation, relations within the system and with the outside world become increasingly unsatisfactory for those concerned. Employees are increasingly demotivated and partners outside the organization develop distrust in the organizational system.
- *The integration phase*: This type of crisis, which then results from the over-structuring of an organizational system, requires new and consistent reorganization measures, which ideally initiate an *integration* phase. At the beginning of

such transformations, it is recommended to consider the needs of interaction partners both external and internal to the organization. The strategy of change should in fact be geared to the consistent *cultivation of relationships* both internally and externally (Lievegoed, 1974). Ideally, collaborative management structures and new forms of public relations are then developed.

Transfer to Coaching Practice

Knowledge of organizational theory is indispensable for coaching. The problem at hand is almost always a matter of organizational-theoretical patterns of interpretation. Ideally, each client's concern is reconstructed in the context of the respective organization. It is therefore advisable to analyze the client's organizational system as a structural configuration, perhaps only briefly but as clearly as possible, in the first meeting. In this way, the coach gets a first idea of the client's position in the overall organization. This can be achieved relatively quickly with the help of an organizational chart sketch or as a *flexible organizational chart* using building blocks (Schreyögg, 2007). In this way, it is possible to get an overview of the essential formal patterns of the client organization, its position, and that of its complementary position partners. Afterward, clients can be asked to explain their function and sphere of influence. This approach promotes understanding from the very first meeting. The coach will then reconstruct informal patterns, depending on the client's question. However, informal patterns are of particular importance when it comes to conflict issues. This almost always involves coalitions or intrigues, which are usually based on a combination of formal and informal patterns.

A central aspect is the examination of all organizational peculiarities when coaching newly appointed executives (Schreyögg, 2010). Then it is often even necessary to deal with the organizational patterns in a very systematic and planned manner in the sense of conflict prevention. Not only formal and informal structural phenomena are relevant here, but also the respective organizational or departmental culture. Therefore, cultural analyses have to be included regularly; this holds particularly true in the case of mergers in order to identify and deal with the potential for conflict.

Organizational process models are often important for clients to understand why there are such turbulent conflicts at the end of the pioneering phase and why it then makes sense to establish more formal patterns. However, process models are also important for understanding the *aging of* organizations when there are too many and too dysfunctional regulators.

Open Questions

When dealing with organizational topics, questions often arise about the *field expertise of coaches*, i.e., their intimate knowledge of certain fields or certain systems. It can be said that coaches who have already worked in organizations, preferably of different kinds, are at an advantage. This is because they can get an accurate picture of their client's situation faster than a person without previous organizational experience. In principle, internal coaches have the advantage that they know the system from which their clients originate relatively well. Their disadvantage, however, is that they often only got to know this specific organization only and therefore cannot see some phenomena against the difference to other systems.

The question is different with the external coach. External coaches often operate in specific industries, so that they can make good use of their knowledge from previous consultations for new clients. However, it can happen that the clients come from extremely different milieus and coaches must first get used to a specific industry they are not yet familiar with.

An external coach rarely has detailed knowledge of all the systems they come into contact with through their clients. However, as leading organizational theorists note, organizations have considerable similarities, i.e., some phenomena are found across many organizations. Thus, the phenomena described are basal organizational patterns, the detailed analysis of which must be adapted to the organizational system in question. But this is exactly what is challenging for a coach because it offers always an opportunity to generate new knowledge.

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Organizational Culture and Coaching

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This chapter considers the rich set of connections that exist between organization culture and coaching and examines three main ways in which an enhanced awareness of culture can inform executive coaching. Experienced coaches intuitively understand the importance of the context of leadership development, and the need for successful managers to become skillful at both adjusting to and in consciously shaping culture. But for less experienced coaches, consciously incorporating a cultural perspective often comes less naturally. This limits a coach's ability to guide their clients in the fundamental challenge that culture guru Edgar Schein put forth to leaders, "Either you manage the culture, or it manages you" (Schein, 1985).

The chapter begins with a brief description of a case study that illustrates some of the important connections *linking culture and coaching*. We follow this with a discussion of three perspectives: *Culture as Context*—when coaching is used to help executives understand the context in which they are operating; *Culture as the Target of Change*—when coaching focuses on the executive's role in understanding and leading organizational changes that are rooted in the culture; and finally, *Creating a Culture of Coaching*—when teaching executives to serve as coaches to their people in order to improve the organization.

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Culture and Coaching

The case that we present to highlight the importance of combining culture and coaching focuses on the transformation of a health insurance company that has operated for decades in the USA. The recent implementation of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) has created a swirl of changes in the industry, making it abundantly clear that insurance companies need to either change quickly or get left behind.

This organization's *capacity for change* has been the focus of a culture transformation effort over the past decade. Prior to the ACA, this was driven by the CEO, who saw that the organization had grown too comfortable with its success. The CEO championed a new focus on growth and innovation, and delegated much of the action to a cross-functional culture team. This team initiated a variety of programs to rethink the core values, engender more ownership and accountability among employees, and create a new innovation process sparked by employee ideas. Many of the initiatives were successful and helped people to see the organization as more flexible and empowering.

Within the first 2 years of the ACA rollout, however, the rules of the industry changed dramatically and the organization struggled to keep pace. These changes exposed specific challenges in how the organization listens to its customers and executes the changes needed. Repeated culture surveys over this same period documented a steady decline in the organization's *customer focus*, decreasing from the third quartile to the bottom quartile relative to other companies. At first, this data helped to create a group dialogue with the top executives about their collective role and accountability for restoring the focus on customers. One of the core challenges identified was that many of the executives were deferring this responsibility to one or two members of the team who had regular customer contact. This insight opened up an honest discussion about whether rebuilding customer focus was truly a top priority and what actions would be needed to drive this change throughout the organization.

One-to-one coaching allowed each executive to further explore this issue within the context of their own personal and professional development. In addition to the culture data, each executive participated in 360° feedback and personality assessments to provide personalized insights into their strengths and challenges. Not surprisingly, this data revealed that many of the executives were limited in their capabilities to lead the organization toward a stronger customer mindset. With the help of professional coaches, each executive was encouraged to explore the benefits of focused development in this area and how this fit with their other priorities. For those executives who elected to focus their development planning on customer focus, the coaches then helped to facilitate a brainstorming and goal-setting process for the behaviors that would strengthen the organization's focus on its customers. For example, one of the executives chose to use customer-centric language more frequently and search out positive customer stories to share internally. Other executives chose to reach out to the more externally focused members of the team to better understand how they could support customer initiatives.

Three Guiding Perspectives

Our approach to integrating coaching and culture joins a long line of scholars and practitioners who have described the benefits of a systems approach, and especially the notion that leaders must work both *in* and *on* their organizations. We believe that this approach can stimulate new frameworks and methods for strengthening the connections between coaching, OD, and core business imperatives (Anderson, 2013; Orenstein, 2002; Saporito, 1996). We organize this discussion in terms of three guiding perspectives.

Culture as Context

Organizations are influenced by many aspects of their context. Nationality, industry, and occupation all have a strong influence on culture, as do many aspects of social identities, such as gender and ethnicity. Context can also reflect the specific history and origins of the organization. Since coaching has gained global popularity over the last decade, with the International Coach Federation (ICF) reporting nearly 23,000 professional members in 2013 (ICF, 2013), the demand for coaches that have an appreciation for multicultural and intercultural issues continues to grow.

When the coach and their clients have different cultural backgrounds, it is important that the coach has an awareness of cultural differences and demonstrates the knowledge and flexibility to adapt (Rosinski, 2003). Peterson (2007) describes the influence of national-societal cultures on several conditions for learning and change. For example, cultures can shape the most effective ways for a coach to provide feedback and the types of appeals to change that will be most effective. While cultural knowledge is useful for the coach, Peterson also warns of the miscues that cultural stereotypes can create.

The DELTA framework builds on Hofstede's (1980) dimensions of national cultures as a starting point and generates six guidelines for improving cultural sensitivity in coaching (Coultas et al., 2011). For example, Coultas et al. suggest that coaches "frame the implications of feedback and rationale for behavior change to fit the coachee's orientation toward either *individualism or collectivism*," and "in societies high in uncertainty avoidance and concern for face, approach giving negative feedback more sensitively" (p. 154). It is particularly important to recognize how the same words may carry different meanings as a function of cultural nuances rooted in connotations and word associations (Heise, 2010).

Another perspective has to do with how coaches can best prepare leaders for multicultural or intercultural work contexts. Rosinksi (2011) developed the cultural orientations framework (COF) as an assessment-driven approach for building cultural awareness. The framework consists of seven dimensions that can be used to compare different cultures. A case example of a strategic alliance between a French and Dutch company illustrates how Rosinski used the COF to create a productive

dialogue among the culturally divided top leadership teams and launch the creation of a shared strategic vision.

We also note that there is a large body of work surrounding the development of cross-cultural competence for leaders. Many coaches work in this space, helping leaders to prepare for international assignments and supporting them through the transition process. This could involve the coach sharing her personal experiences and knowledge of a culture, the use of specific knowledge and skill assessments, or the development of cross-cultural competencies (Abbott, 2014; Derr et al., 2002; Rosinski, 2003).

Finally, the culture of the organization itself is also a powerful and immediate part of the context. Assessing organizational culture as a part of a coaching assignment most often involves a combination of interviews, focus groups, and observations, as well as culture survey tools, which often give a useful picture of the organizational context (Ashkanasy et al., 2000; Denison et al., 2014; Sackmann, 2006) and help describe how the culture provides a set of *opportunities and constraints* on the leader's development and success (Klimoski, 2013). This kind of coaching is particularly helpful in facilitating leadership transitions.

Our case example shows a very specific national and industry culture that has evolved over decades, but is now in the process of dramatic change. Those leaders who were best suited to the past environment may in fact be the ones that have the most difficulty adapting for the future. An understanding of the rapidly changing industry environment proved to be critically important to the coaches' success in helping these leaders adapt.

Culture as the Target of Change

Beyond just developing individual leaders, coaching can also be a valuable support for organizational development and change (Rosinksi, 2011). Culture is an important ingredient in many change efforts, such as mergers and acquisitions, reorganizations, and leadership transitions. In each case, coaching can help leaders explore cultural issues and identify solutions.

Whose Culture Is It? Organizational culture is defined as the values, beliefs, and assumptions that are held by the members of an organization and which guide behavior and facilitate shared meaning (Schein, 1985). Schein's "iceberg metaphor" helps to unbundle these elements and differentiate the effects from the causes. The visible artifacts of a culture reside above the surface while the often unchecked fundamental beliefs and assumptions reside in the deep waters below. If fundamental beliefs and assumptions are the ultimate *causes*, then an important question is: *Whose* fundamental beliefs and assumptions?

Schein (1985) recognized that founders and senior leaders create the culture through their decisions and actions. Over time, their personal beliefs and values get embedded through numerous mechanisms, such as selecting and promoting

like-minded people. Hartnell and Walumbwa (2011) extended Schein's work, focusing on transformational-charismatic leaders and the powerful influence they can have by articulating a compelling vision. Lasting culture change often happens *because* the senior leaders themselves have changed in fundamental ways, by changing their perspective, mindset, and values. Schein's own consulting career bears witness to this point, as he has declined to work with organizations on culture change initiatives without direct access to the CEO (E. Schein, personal communication, June 2, 2015).

Coaching in Culture Change Interventions There is no widely agreed-upon formula for planned culture change. Our experience is that each practitioner tends to draw on a preferred set of frameworks, methods, and tools. There are nonetheless a number of commonalities, as well as a few core principles that guide most culture transformations. For example, facilitating increased awareness of the culture and its impact on core business issues is a common starting point, and the diagnostic stage is often followed by a series of group dialogues to align on priorities for action (Denison et al., 2012).

But all approaches must deal with the issue of leader-culture fit (Burns et al., 2013). What is the overlap between the developmental plans for the organization and for its leaders? As Nieminen et al. (2013) show, each leader has some capabilities for which (1) development is strongly supported by the culture, (2) some capabilities for which development may be impeded by the culture, (3) some capabilities where the leader can help move the culture forward, and (4) some areas where the leader and the culture need to move forward together. Applying this framework can help the coach and leader create a developmental discussion about key leadership attributes as they set priorities for action.

In practice, these coaching activities generally take on two forms, discussed below.

Formalized Coaching on a Culture Agenda The first form looks quite similar to the typical one-on-one coaching relationship but where the agenda is informed by the specific insights and needs that arise from the culture development and change process. In this case, the OD intervention provides a variety of jumping-off points for a professional coach to work with individual leaders over an extended period of time. The impetus for formalized coaching could be identified by either the sponsor of the change initiative or by the leaders themselves.

If done effectively, the individual development process can advance in parallel with the broader culture development process, with each serving the needs of the other (Katz & Miller, 1996). For example, coaching can help the leader to better understand and optimize her personal impact on the organizational transformation. Coaching can also facilitate leaders' commitment to the process and help to connect all development activities—individual and organizational—back to core business issues and needs (Saporito, 1996).

One of the most unique benefits of professional coaching in this context rests in the opportunity to challenge and shift a leader's fundamental beliefs and assumptions. For some leaders, their mindset is so well hidden by their defense mechanisms

that they are rarely questioned. However, within the safety and trust of a coaching relationship, mindsets can be questioned and, over time, reformulated. Along these same lines, coaches can provide "outsider" feedback, helping the leader to broaden her perspective and acknowledge possible "blind spots." While it is the *leader* who must ultimately commit to these changes, it is the coach's role to help her discover the types of changes that will most positively impact the culture and organization.

Coaching Moments Ideally, this kind of individualized support would be provided to *all* leaders, viewed as an integral part of the culture change process rather than as an "add-on" feature. However, our experience is that professional coaching is provided selectively, depending on organizational needs and appetites. For this reason, it is important to also take advantage of the many informal coaching opportunities that arise within the culture development and change process. These opportunities can be sought moment to moment by the people who are closest to the process.

Coaching moments occur when one person takes advantage of a small opportunity to provide coaching to someone else. Turner and McCarthy (2015) described the following as key characteristics of these coaching moments: "they are short, informal, unexpected, unscheduled, and focused and targeted on an immediate or just occurring incident or issue" (p. 2). Inspired by the term "teachable moments" from education and healthcare settings (Lawson & Flocke, 2009), coaching moments reflect a unique combination of: (1) a situation that holds strong learning or change potential and (2) the way the coach identifies the opportunity and acts quickly with skill to facilitate the learning process.

The culture development and change process create an ongoing stream of coaching moments. The process is reflective and requires people to think about the organization, its people, and its history in a way that is not part of the everyday work routine. A safe environment is created for questioning established perspectives. This can lead to new ideas and focus the organization's attention in new ways. It can also expose strained relationships and point out old habits that need to be left behind. Leaders must look inside themselves while also looking outside at how they will champion fundamental shifts in those around them. And if done effectively, the process helps leaders to re-examine the business and strategy in light of the cultural dynamics at play.

Translating a situation into effective coaching moments, however, depends on the skills and expertise of the coach. From this perspective, we believe it will help when the culture development and change process is supported by experienced professional coaches who are actively looking for coaching moments along the way. When this is not possible, an alternative is to build foundational or rudimentary coaching skills among the facilitators and participants. While there are obvious benefits to direct involvement of professional coaches, the use of coaching behaviors need not be limited in this way, as the next section of our chapter explores in greater depth.

Our case study provided a great example of a coaching moment. When one of the new executives who had just joined the organization expressed reservations about sharing the developmental priorities that came from the 360° feedback, the coach

raised two important points: First, that this was a great opportunity for her to explain her leadership style and future priorities to a leadership team that she was just getting to know; second, that her openness would serve as a good role model for how she was hoping that her people would engage in the process as it was rolled out in the organization. Both of these suggestions proved to be very helpful.

Creating a Culture of Coaching

The creation of a "coaching culture" is often discussed as an option when the basic objective is to embed the principles of coaching deeply within the organization. Moving toward a coaching culture implies a shift in management behavior, away from the traditional command-and-control tactics toward a more empowering, supportive, and consultative style. Providing direction and "telling" are exchanged for asking good questions and use of active listening (Hart, 2003; Hutton-Taylor, 1999; Schein, 2013; Yu, 2007). The use of these behaviors is not limited to specific leaders or circumstances but rather seen as the bedrock of all interactions between people (Passmore & Jastrzebska, 2011). Clutterbuck (2003) described several of the key values of a coaching culture, including that (1) people welcome and actively seek feedback, (2) time for reflection is valued, (3) people engage in constructive confrontation, (4) coaching is seen as an opportunity rather than remediation, and (5) personal growth and organizational learning are integrated.

Eaton and Brown (2002) described Vodafone's transformation toward a coaching and collaboration culture. This meant resetting the vision and values, focusing on rapid information sharing and communication, and investing more heavily in team building and development. A coaching program was established as one of the primary channels to advance and reinforce these initiatives. The program began with six senior managers and was cascaded to another 85 middle managers. A 2-day workshop taught leaders rudimentary coaching skills, covering "goal-setting, active listening, creative questioning, resource-finding, reframing, and action-planning" (p. 286). Follow-up coaching was provided to each participant along with a capstone workshop that helped the management team check in on progress and keep the momentum.

The Vodafone case illustrates the important role that professional coaches play in the process. Passmore and Jastrzebska (2011) describe how focusing on formalizing the coaching for senior leaders and working to align the individual agendas with organizational priorities was very important at the beginning. But over time, the coaching was internalized and became less formal, first by creating a cadre of internal coaches, and then by making coaching a core competency for all managers.

In this way, coaching was made available organization-wide and then eventually to key external stakeholders.

Other studies outline some of the key challenges and barriers of moving to a coaching culture. A 2008 survey of 374 executives and HR leaders from a variety of industries reported that the most commonly cited barriers involved a lack of clear process, expectations, and business relevance. Another challenge had to do with leaders lacking the time and resources to learn and practice coaching (Anderson et al., 2009). A recent study by Turner and McCarthy (2015) looks more specifically at the decision process of individual leaders as they choose how to use coaching behaviors with their employees. This study found that managers weigh the risks in terms of the relationship and trust that exists with the employee, the employee's coachability, and their own coaching skills. With these factors in mind, it will be important for organizations to set realistic expectations about the scope and impact of coaching by internal managers and to recognize the ways in which this can augment but not replace the expertise and neutrality that is provided by external, professional coaches.

There are many clear benefits of creating a coaching culture. But there are actually very few studies that focus at the *organization* level and which provide insights beyond what is known about the effects of formal coaching on individuals. One example is a study by Agarwal et al. (2006) which found that, following a 2-day coaching workshop for sales managers, the performance of individual salespeople was improved as a function of their managers' greater use of the newly learned coaching behaviors. At a broader level, the Vodafone case reported improved trust across the organization, more effective delegation and empowerment by managers and employees, and service quality and speed that was improved from third in the market to first (Eaton & Brown, 2002). Supporting the general pattern of these findings, a 2014 survey of North American companies found that, among those who reported the strongest coaching cultures, 60% also reported outperforming their competitors in revenue growth compared to only 40% among the remaining companies (ICF, 2014).

One area that we believe is worth considering further is how the narrow concepts that are used to describe a coaching culture relate to the more general culture theories and models. Scholars and practitioners have advanced outcome-specific models of culture intended to narrowly capture the behaviors, values, and attitudes that relate most directly to their specific outcomes of interest. This has resulted in a proliferation of culture models, from the "innovation culture" to the "safety culture" to the "customer service culture," and so on. Although these specific models can be helpful for focusing energy within a particular domain, there are a number of drawbacks including increased complexity, the delegation of culture management to specific functional areas, and the potential to lose sight of more fundamental cultural dynamics (Nieminen & Bruyere, 2013).

Conclusion

This chapter has examined the close connections between culture and coaching. Our three perspectives consider some of the different dynamics that can help integrate these two complementary, but often separate interventions. In each domain, we see exciting opportunities to advance both research and practice by drawing out a more explicit link between coaching and culture. And the importance of this work is as clear today as it was 30 years ago:

> The bottom line for leaders is if they do not become conscious of the cultures in which they are embedded, those cultures will manage them. Cultural understanding is desirable for all of us, but it is essential to leaders if they are to lead (Schein, 1985, p. 22)

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Perception and Judgement Formation and Their Significance in Coaching

Lisa Schubert

Perception and Judgement and Their Importance in Coaching

The coaching concept underlying this chapter is that of solution-focused coaching (De Shazer & Dolan, 2012; Cavanagh & Grant, 2014). This coaching approach is characterized above all by its basic assumptions. The client is seen as an expert in his or her question and it is assumed that possible solutions are already in place in the client. The coach supports with an appreciative basic attitude, active listening and directing attention to positive and successful aspects [Cavanagh and Grant (2014), give a good overview on the topic of solution-focused coaching). This also means that the coach does not have to be an expert on the client's question, but an expert in listening, supporting and above all directing attention (De Shazer, 1988). Does this mean that solution-focused coaches do not need any theoretical knowledge at all, because they completely follow the client's point of view and reality of life? Since the overriding goal in solution-focused coaching is to expand the client's scope for thought and action (Cavanagh & Grant, 2014), the coach certainly needs theoretical knowledge [a comprehensive discussion on this topic can be found in Held (1996)]. From a psychological point of view, this includes, for example, theoretical knowledge about how humans perceive their environment and what distortions of perception are typical. Those who know how perception can be limited can ask competent questions that enable the client to adopt new perspectives. To be able to conquer new scope for thought and action, it is necessary to focus on additional aspects of situations, one's fellow human being and one's own person, i.e. to expand one's perception or to focus more on aspects that have so far received little attention. Thus,

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subsequent judgements can be based on a broad information base and the behavioural repertoire can be expanded.

Case Study

Jim, an established doctor, 44 years of age, turns to the coach with problems in staff management. High turnover and a tense working atmosphere in the practice cause the client problems. The difficulties have existed since the practice was taken over 5 years ago. The client enjoys the medical work and the practice is economically successful. However, in the conversation, it becomes clear that he is very much challenged by the everyday practice and his additional tasks as an employer and entrepreneur. He hardly has any time for himself, often does not sleep enough or sleeps badly and suffers from the fact that he has no stable social network.

Due to the tense personnel situation, both the client and his employees often must work overtime. This repeatedly leads to conflicts and to dismissals, resulting in a further deterioration of the personnel situation and even more work for the remaining employees. The client's attention is entirely focused on the economic situation and on "not drowning" even in the face of the many burdens. He reacts irritably to requests from employees for relief and less overtime. "I haven't taken a vacation in 2 years and they complain when they have to work an extra hour. Nobody asks if I want to be in the consulting room at 7:00 at night."

In coaching, the clients are at the centre of attention, they are heard and receive recognition for their achievements. Their burdens are seen. Their attention and that of the coach are completely focused on them and their needs. In a second step, what was previously denied to the client becomes possible. Attention is focused on the needs of the employees. How do they experience the situation? What are their needs? Without much thinking about it, the client previously assumed that the same things at work were important to them as to him. It was clear to him that the well-being of the patients and a smoothly functioning and economically efficient practice, which generates surpluses, is the main interest of all those involved. During the coaching process, the client is instructed to view the situation from the perspective of his or her employees. Using the two-chair method (see below), he succeeds in putting himself in the perspective of an employee with whom conflicts are particularly frequent and whom the client experiences as "lazy" because she regularly leaves work undone. He concludes that this employee probably also has an interest in the well-being of the patients. From the employees' point of view, however, the view of a practice that generates surpluses is different. A surplus, which flows into the doctor's pocket, cannot make the extra work palatable to her. Especially since the employee does competitive sports in her free time and misses her training more and more often due to frequent overtime. Her desire to leave work on time therefore probably results less from a "lazy" personality than from another goal that the employee pursues very single-mindedly outside her workplace. This new perspective for Jim enables him to

understand the needs of his employee and to look more sympathetically at her wishes for a punctual end of work.

However, this has not made the situation any easier for him. While he had previously dismissed such wishes with a "life is not a bowl of cherries", now two voices are arguing within him. That of the entrepreneur who must keep a practice with a thin staffing level running, and that of the understanding employer who has the needs of his employees in mind. The coach therefore now focuses the client's attention back on himself. What do the determined entrepreneur and the understanding employer have to say about the matter? Are there other "inner team members" (see below) who can contribute something to the question of how to reduce tension in the team and how to organize the practice in such a way that the needs of all are met as far as possible?

During coaching the client concludes that he wants to reduce the workload for himself and his team. The determined entrepreneur has been joined by other consultants and a new view of the situation becomes possible. The client decides to shorten the consultation hours a little and to hire an additional employee for paperwork. He wants to use the free time that this also creates for him to look after himself. During coaching, he realized that it is easier for him to focus his attention on the needs of his employees if he himself is not neglected.

As in the example above, the perception processes relevant in coaching are rarely about the perception of things. Almost always it is about the perception of oneself, other people, and the interaction of the client with the people around him. Therefore, this chapter will mainly deal with social perception and the processing of social information and its significance in coaching.

Social Perception and Judgement

To be able to interact successfully with your fellow human beings and to behave appropriately, it is important to know others and their personality as well as possible and to be able to predict their behaviour as well as possible. Especially in (psychological) coaching, clients always have the desire to get to know personality models. The more plausible the alleged "personality styles" and the more comprehensive their claim for an explanation, the more welcome the corresponding models are to clients. "If your employee is type A, you should praise him regularly. If he is type B, he will be more motivated to work if he is put under pressure." etc. But unfortunately (or fortunately) humans do not function in such a simple and uniform way.

The impression you get from other persons is made up of a lot of information we have about that person. What do they look like, what do they say, how do they behave, how do they smell, what is important to them, how do they behave towards other people, etc. The more you have to do with a person, the more information is added. The image one has of the other person must therefore be constantly adapted and new information must be integrated. Firstly, because additional information is added, e.g. when a person is experienced in a new environment or situation. An

attempt is then made to infer personality from observable behaviour (Jones & Davis, 1965). On the other hand, people change during life and these changes must also be perceived. The image we have of the other changes accordingly. However, this additional information is always considered in light of what is already known about a person (implicit personality theory, Bruner, 1957). It, therefore, has less influence on social perception and judgement than initial information or a first encounter (Kelley, 1950).

Typical Distortions of Social Perception and Corresponding Judgements

To understand other people and to get an idea of their personality, social information is often not processed without distortion. Some typical distortions of perception, which can also become relevant in the coaching process, will be discussed here.

Correspondence Bias and Difference Between Actor and Observer

We tend to infer the general personality of a person from observable behaviour in certain situations (Correspondence Bias, Jones & Davis, 1965; Ross, 1977; Ross et al., 1977). For example, a person who behaves aggressively in a certain situation is perceived as a fundamentally aggressive person (even if their aggression may have been due more to the situation than to their personality). We explain our own behaviour, however, more by the circumstances than by our personality (actor-observer-difference, Jones & Nisbett, 1972). One reason for this is that we perceive situations differently, depending on whether we observe them as outsiders or whether we ourselves are the actors in the situation. If you look at a situation from the outside, your attention will be focused primarily on the people involved. They, therefore, consider these and their personality traits to be the most important factors influencing the course of the situation. Those who not only observe a situation but act on their own, will usually not observe themselves so closely. Their attention is more focused on their surroundings and the situation. They, therefore, consider the environmental factors (and less their own personality) to be situation-determining (Storms, 1973).

Self-serving Attribution Distortions

Not only the focus of attention but also motivation influences how a situation is perceived. Especially when something succeeds, we tend to attribute this to ourselves and our abilities. If something goes wrong, the reasons for this tend to be sought in the situation or in others (self-serving biases, Johnson et al., 1964; Miller & Ross, 1975). If a project leader can complete a project successfully and on time, they will probably attribute this (among other things) to their own leadership and coordination skills. If the project cannot be completed on time or only with defects, excessive demands of the client, adversities in the procurement of materials or a high level of sick leave in the team are used as possible reasons.

Deduction from Oneself to Others

One's own attitudes and personality traits also distort the perception of others. Thus, we tend to assume that others think, feel and act similarly to us (False consensus effect, Ross et al., 1977). For example, those who give up leisure time and time with the family for the sake of work take this for granted and assume that most others would set similar priorities.

Self-fulfilling Prophecy

Once we have a picture of another person, we treat that person accordingly, thereby increasing the likelihood that they will actually behave as we initially thought they would (self-fulfilling prophecy, Snyder, 1984). Anyone who has heard beforehand that the new manager should be a "tough cookie" will meet them with coolness and reserve. This, in turn, can lead to cool and dismissive behaviour on the part of the manager, who actually behaves like a "tough cookie". A similar effect occurs for members of certain groups against whom many people have prejudices. They behave according to the prejudice, although they could behave differently (stereotype threat, Steele et al., 2002). This is particularly relevant in performance situations when the fear of doing worse, according to the prejudice, really leads to a worse performance.

Coaching Interventions to Expand Perception

As already mentioned in the introduction, the overriding goal of coaching is to expand the scope for thought and action. This also happens through an expanded perception. Or in the sense of the solution-focused approach: problems are not an

expression of illness or dysfunctionality. Rather, they show that it is time to try out new perspectives and behaviours (Cavanagh & Grant, 2014; O'Connell, 2005). In the following, concrete coaching interventions are presented that can help to look at a situation in a new and more comprehensive way.

Situation Exploration with Visualisation

Probably the simplest intervention, but unfortunately often underestimated in its importance and effect, is to give the client time to consider and explain a question or problem in peace. A detailed examination without time pressure leads to a more reflective processing of the contents, subsequent judgements and actions are based less on spontaneous impulses and associations, but more on facts and knowledge (Strack & Deutsch, 2004). Stereotypes and prejudices also influence judgements less if they are not made under time pressure (Devine, 1989). The coach supports the process by listening actively, merely asking questions of understanding and accompanying the client in taking a comprehensive view of the issue. The question "And what else?" invites further viewing and signposting. It can also be provided several times. Especially at the beginning of a coaching process, such a detailed examination of the client's concerns is important and useful. A visualization of the client's descriptions decelerates the process and shows the client which aspects have already been addressed. Ideally, this phase of the conversation only ends when the client is satisfied after viewing the "finished" presentation and does not consider any other aspects to be relevant to his question. Of course, such a presentation can be supplemented in the later coaching process. It can also be used when discussing complex issues or (interpersonal) relationships. This helps the coach and the client to keep the overview. The time invested in a thorough situation analysis at the beginning may be "saved" in the later coaching process.

In solution-focused coaching, such an in-depth consideration of the situation (and thus usually also of the problem) is discussed controversially (Bamberger, 2010; Cavanagh & Grant, 2014). On the one hand, one of the basic assumptions of the solution-focused approach is that a detailed analysis of what has led to the situation provides only limited indications of how the situation can be changed for the better. In the spirit of the early prescription of solutions, no exploration of the situation is undertaken, and the focus is immediately on the future and possible solutions (Jong & Berg, 2012). This early focus on solutions can overwhelm clients (Bamberger, 2010; Cavanagh & Grant, 2014). The above-mentioned intervention of situation exploration is one way of dealing with this area of tension. The client explores the actual state in peace. This usually does not include a detailed analysis of underlying causes. The coach supports the process by focusing on the positive. The assumption that the client himself knows what is important when considering the situation and which aspects should be highlighted is in line with the basic assumptions of solution-focused coaching. With his conviction that the situation is solvable for the client and

that a change for the better by the client is possible, the coach gives the situation exploration a solution-focused framework.

Circular Questions

One intervention from systemic counselling that can support a comprehensive view of a situation is the so-called circular questioning (Simon et al., 2004). Here the client is invited to look at their question or problem from an outsider's perspective. It is less about finding out how other people think about a topic. It is much more about giving the client the opportunity to view his question "from the outside". As mentioned above, those involved in the situation tend to blame the situation for their behaviour. Observers tend to consider the personality of the actor to be decisive. Asking the client to adopt such an "observer perspective" can thus lead to a changed and expanded view of the situation (Storms, 1973).

Two-Chair Method

Conversely, it can be useful to move from the observer position to the situation of the person concerned. This is especially helpful in the case of interpersonal problems. If the client has difficulty understanding the behaviour of another, as is often the case in conflict situations, the invitation to adopt the other's perspective may require a new view of the other. As a rule, however, such an adoption of perspective is only successful if the client feels that they and their concerns are sufficiently understood. Too early guidance to take on a perspective can lead to reactance and defense in the client.

At this point, role plays and other interventions from Gestalt psychology and psychodrama can be used in coaching. For example, clients can be guided to actually "put themselves in the other person's shoes". With two additional chairs (Perls, 2002) a typical interaction between the client and his "difficult counterpart" can be played through. The client fills in their own position as well as that of the other person. Depending on which chair they sit on, they speak for themselves or for the other person. After such an "interaction" the client can look at the situation again from their own chair. From here they can also give "stage directions" to the two actors. If necessary, a situation can be played through several times. Especially in the preparation of difficult conversations, the method can help to understand the perspective of the other person and to try out possible courses of conversation.

Homework and Experiments

Sometimes it is difficult for clients to adopt new perspectives or to imagine that change is possible. Here it can be useful to work with homework and experiments (Bamberger, 2010; Fehm & Helbig, 2008). New perspectives are tried out in "real life" instead of thinking them through theoretically in coaching. Clients can be instructed to observe themselves (and others) in a goal-directed manner. The perspective from which they do this should be worked out in coaching, and the results discussed in coaching. Experiments (e.g. "pretending") can be used to test different behaviour and a different, new reality.

Perception of Inner Processes

The perception of inner processes (thoughts and feelings) is of central importance in coaching. One method to expand and sharpen this perception is the so-called "Inner Team" by Friedemann Schulz von Thun (2003). Here the client is instructed to listen to different voices, values and positions of the members of his "inner team". Like the perception of external processes, the perception of internal processes is also significantly influenced by which aspects the attention is focused on. Here, too, the coach can support the client in not only focusing his attention on the obvious but in taking a second look inside. Schulz von Thun (2003) describes this as the "dominance of the loud and fast". Some inner team members speak up faster and more vehemently than others. The goal of coaching is a comprehensive view of the inner team, in which all team members have their say and can contribute to the overall process. In the above practical example of Jim, it was above all the "entrepreneur" who spoke out loud ("The shop has to run, everyone has to do a good job"). After Jim had looked at the situation from the perspective of his employee, the "understanding employer" also responded ("The needs of the employees are important".). During the exploration of the Inner Team, the "Overworked" ("I want to have my rest too".), the "Strict boss" ("If I say it's working longer, then it's working longer".) and the "Harmony-needy" ("The main thing is that there will be less arguing here in the future".) joined in. After a consultation with his "inner team", the client then concluded that he would like to shorten the consultation hours and hire an additional employee for paperwork.

   The aim of this method is to clarify inner conflicts, to deal with inner plurality, to build up personality and coherent communication with others, which is facilitated or only made possible by inner coherence.

Summary

Social perception does not function purely rationally but is subject to typical distortions. A basic knowledge of these distortions makes it easier for the coach to ask helpful questions that open new perspectives for the client. Additional aspects of the situation can thus be perceived or brought more into focus. Based on this expanded perception, the client can make informed and reflected decisions, and the scope for thought and action is expanded.

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Personality Development and Coaching

Jule Specht and Denis Gerstorf

Introduction

This is a born leader, some say with conviction in the context of personnel decisions. But is there such a thing as a born leader? This would mean that future leaders would differ from people without leadership potential at a very early stage, or at least before they take on leadership responsibilities. But would not it also be conceivable that people change through their experience as managers, in other words that leadership qualities are learned? Just as personality changes with the help of coaching when dealing with difficult situations or major life events (such as a change of job or partner)? Research on personality development deals with the question of how stable or malleable individual characteristics are and how change can be initiated. This research area can thus also provide information about the developmental potential of people in a professional context and show opportunities and limits for targeted coaching in the event of a desire for change in personality.

In this chapter, we substantiate our thesis that changes in personality are not rare, but rather the norm and can be used specifically with the help of coaching. We begin with an overview of personality changes in adulthood, introduce various theoretical perspectives and give empirical examples. Finally, we look at the potential of desired personality changes through coaching.

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Stability and Changeability of Personality in Adulthood

The core questions of current research on personality development in adulthood include, above all, the questions of *when* and *why* changes in personality occur: Do changes in personality, which has long been considered stable, occur at all? If so, what kind of changes are these? Are there periods in life that are particularly sensitive to such changes? And how are these changes initiated?

Definition of Personality

Today's personality development research differs significantly from earlier views, which emphasized above all the stability of adult personality. The current definition of personality encompasses all of those characteristics that can describe individual differences in thinking, feeling, and behavior (John et al., 2008). The definition follows a nomothetic approach, which assumes that all people bear themselves the same characteristics, but the expression of these characteristics differs across people (Asendorpf & Neyer, 2012). The central prerequisite for being considered a general personality trait is that this trait must be *relatively stable over* time and across situations (Roberts & Jackson, 2008). This relativization shows the potential for changing personality traits.

One systematic approach to measure and bring structure into the overwhelming number of individual traits are lexical analyses: from that perspective, all relevant personality traits appear in the language and therefore, dictionaries are used as a basis for personality assessments, in order to uncover similarities and differences between traits with the help of factor-analytical procedures (Allport & Odbert, 1936; Goldberg, 1990). As a result, the *Big Five model* (John et al., 2008; McCrae & Costa, 2008) was born, which has shaped personality psychology since the 1990s at the latest. According to this, five comprehensive personality traits are distinguished from one another at the highest hierarchical level, namely neuroticism, extraversion, openness to experiences, agreeableness, and conscientiousness. Each of these superordinate factors consists of a number of more specific personality facets (e.g., Soto et al., 2011).

Forms of Personality Development

Based on the common understanding of a relatively (in contrast to perfectly) stable personality, the potential for personality development arises. This does not describe daily fluctuations in personality states, but long-term changes, which in turn are relatively stable over time. Such changes can be quantified in many ways (for an

overview: Ozer, 1986). The two most common types of personality change deal with change at the level of groups (rather than focusing on single individuals).

Changes in mean scores describe average development trends. It is of interest here to what extent people change on average over time, for example, whether conscientiousness is on average more pronounced in 55-year-olds compared to 25-year-olds. This approach allows to test for general changes across time as well as developmental trends in specific age groups or life situations. For that, a comparison of mean scores across time is made using longitudinal data (at least two measurement points for a given person) or, if only cross-sectional data are available, across age groups. Here, it is not possible to make statements about individual trajectories—it can only be observed whether groups of individuals change on average or whether age groups and cohorts differ from one another.

Rank-order changes describe differential development trends. This is a relative measure of change, which examines whether people change in relation to each other. An example is whether people who were initially among the most conscientious in a group are still among the most conscientious later on. One measure of relative stability is correlation. Again, no statements can be made about individual trajectories—it can only be observed whether there are more or less strong changes in the rank ordering of individuals in a group on a given personality trait.

Personality Development in Different Phases of Life

If we look at the developmental trajectories of personality traits, it is striking that the greatest changes in adult personality occur in young adulthood and again in old age (Table 1). This observation applies not only to most personality traits, but also to the use of different measures of change (for an overview: Specht et al., 2014a).

In *young adulthood* between 18 and 30 years of age, an increase in conscientiousness and emotional stability is generally observed, as well as an increase in social dominance, a facet of extraversion. On the other hand, an average decrease is observed in openness to new experiences and sociability, another facet of

Table 1 Developmental trajectories of personality in adulthood

Life phase	Changes	General sensitivity to change
Young adulthood (18–30 years)	Conscientiousness Social dominance Emotional stability Openness to experiences Sociability	High
Middle adulthood (30–60 years)	Only minor general changes in personality	Low
Late adulthood (from 60 years)	Agreeableness Openness to experiences	High

Note: See text for further information and references

extraversion. No significant changes are shown for agreeableness in this phase of life (Roberts et al., 2006; for a current overview: Hutteman et al., 2014).

Further changes are found especially in people with an undercontrolled personality type. These individuals are characterized by comparatively low conscientiousness and agreeableness. Their share in the general population decreases in young adulthood from initially 40% to about 20% (Specht et al., 2014b). The rank-order stability is also comparatively low in this period of life with correlations between 0.50 and 0.60 over a year (Roberts & DelVecchio, 2000). Interestingly, there is initial evidence that trends in personal development have been increasingly delayed in recent decades, so that this sensitivity to change now persists until the age of 35–40 years (Arnett, 2000).

Middle adulthood is a period of life that is characterized by comparatively high stability. There are no substantial changes neither in the rank-order of individuals nor in the mean levels of traits. However, as mentioned above, this does not mean that personality does not change. Rather, even at its peak of stability, the correlation is only 0.75 over 1 year (Roberts & DelVecchio, 2000), leaving room for individual changes.

Old age, on the other hand, again is characterized by surprisingly many changes in personality. Although this period of life has long been underrepresented in the personality psychology literature, new studies show significant changes in both mean levels and rank-order from the age of 60–70 years (Ardelt, 2000; Lucas & Donnellan, 2011; Specht et al., 2011). In view of the increasing number of older workers, this finding is also of great importance in the occupational context. It is shown, for example, that agreeableness is more pronounced at a higher age and that openness to new experiences continues to decline, as it does in young adulthood (Hutteman et al., 2014).

Causes of Personality Changes

Different theoretical perspectives make different assumptions about the reasons for changes in personality (Specht et al., 2014a). One of the most influential and at the same time most controversial perspectives is the *Five-Factor Theory of Personality* by McCrae and Costa (2008). It is assumed that the Big Five are purely biological, i.e., determined by genes and brain structures. The theory is based on the five-factor model and understands the Big Five as hierarchically superior personality traits that are primarily characterized by stability. Following this model, healthy people after the age of 30 years do not show any form of meaningful personality change. If indeed change occurs, this happens at the level of so-called *characteristic adaptations* (i.e., habits and attitudes). These characteristic adaptations change in reaction to social requirements and thus form a link between the stable Big Five and the environment.

Taking the empirical results described above into account, this theory is not tenable in its strict interpretation. Rather, significant changes occur in the Big Five

personality traits even at an advanced age and these cannot be attributed to intrinsic maturation (cf. Specht et al., 2014a).

The *theory of gene–environment effects* (Scarr & McCartney, 1983) takes, in particular, the interplay between genetically determined personality traits and environmental experiences into account. The theory assumes that genetic predisposition prompts individuals for certain environmental experiences, which in turn can influence their further personality development. These mechanisms of action occur in three main ways (Plomin et al., 1977, *among others*):

(a) Passively, i.e., indirectly via genetic relatives such as parents who confront their children with specific environmental situations (e.g., with a piano in the household) and thus contribute to an association between genetic predisposition (musicality) and environmental experience (presence of a piano).
(b) Evocatively, i.e., by a person's genetic disposition (e.g., high intelligence) causing specific reactions in the environment (e.g., being particularly mentored).
(c) Actively, i.e., via a person themselves who select themselves into specific environmental situations based on their genetically determined characteristics (e.g., extraversion; seeking out social situations instead of staying away from them). Especially this last mechanism of action is of central importance in adult life, also in the professional context. Prime examples for such self-selection are when people apply for jobs in certain professional fields or certain career stages.

In fact, many studies now show that a considerable part of a person's experience is shaped by their personality. These selection effects include, for example, the observation that people high in extraversion are more likely than those low in extraversion to be internationally mobile (Zimmermann & Neyer, 2013) or to move in with their partner in the next few years (Specht et al., 2011). However, when personality changes occur as a result of a new environment, they appear to be largely *not* genetically determined, according to a twin study (Kandler et al., 2012). This suggests that environmental situations do not necessarily mediate the connection between genetic predisposition and personality, but that environmental influences can independently impact personality development.

One theoretical perspective that attributes the causes of personality changes to biological factors as well as environmental experiences is the *Neo-Socioanalytic Theory by* Roberts and colleagues (e.g., Roberts & Wood, 2006). Seven principles underlie this perspective: The principle of maturation describes the average personality development toward a more agreeable, conscientious, and emotionally stable personality. The principle of cumulative continuity assumes that rank-order stability increases with age—an assumption which, as explained above, is consistent with the empirical evidence from young adulthood into midlife, but has now been refuted for old age.

Five other principles make assumptions about what could cause changes, but also the high stability of personality. For example, the principle of plasticity assumes that people can change over the entire life span in response to the environment, which is in stark contrast to *Five-Factor Theory* presented above. The principle of social

investment assumes that changes occur in the context of new social roles (Hormuth, 1991).

The stability of personality is promoted by stable social roles (role-continuity principle) and a developed identity (principle of identity development), as well as by experiences that emphasize personality traits that led to those experienced in the first place (correspondence principle).

On the basis of these theoretical perspectives, explanations can be derived for the above-mentioned empirical findings of change-sensitive age phases: Personality changes in young adulthood can be attributed, although not exclusively, to intrinsic maturation processes (McCrae & Costa, 2008) as well as to changes in social roles that typically occur at this age (Roberts & Wood, 2006). Growing stability in middle adulthood suggests a stagnation of intrinsic maturation (McCrae & Costa, 2008) and a decline in the frequency of and challenges imposed by new social roles (Hutteman et al., 2014), possibly favored by people having selected themselves into stable social roles (Scarr & McCartney, 1983). However, the higher change sensitivity in older ages, now corroborated by a myriad of empirical findings, cannot be explained by the three theoretical perspectives described above and therefore requires new explanations (Specht et al., 2014a).

In relation to professional life and especially coaching, this means that personality traits can be changed throughout working life and that personality adapts to new challenges, especially if a person shows a high level of commitment. At the same time, however, this also suggests that personality traits tend to remain stable in their expression if people continuously assume the same professional role (Denissen et al., 2014).

Empirical studies agree with the assumption that it is both genetic predispositions and various life experiences and developmental tasks that shape our personality. For example, twin studies show that differences between individuals can be explained in roughly equal parts by genetic differences between these individuals as well as by differences in the experiences these people have made (Bleidorn et al., 2009).

In accordance with the principles of *Neo-Socioanalytic Theory* (Roberts & Wood, 2006), the experience of life events has an influence on how personality develops. On average, people become more conscientious with the start of their first job (Specht et al., 2011). Because this effect exists under statistical controls of the age of individuals, this finding cannot be explained (alone) by the idea of intrinsic maturation postulated by the *Five-Factor Theory of Personality* (McCrae & Costa, 2008).

Personality Development and Coaching

The findings presented above show that personality is malleable over the entire life span and that these changes are partly prompted by influences that are not inherent in the person but, for example, by externally triggered life circumstances. In this

context, the question arises for coaching in how far desired changes in personality can be supported.

Targeted Personality Change

An obvious strategy for the targeted modification of personality traits is to change the environment; that is, to select or change professional situations in a targeted manner so that they provoke changes in personality. For example, if a person receives positive reinforcement for reliable professional behavior, this will increase the probability of future reliable behavior, which should lead to changes in conscientiousness in the long term (Roberts & Jackson, 2008). It also means that an exact fit between a job applicant and a job in advance is not fully necessary, but that people can adapt to the requirements of the job once they have started. Active personality development on the part of an employee can occur when the person accepts another job, is transferred to another location, for example, to another cultural area, or takes advantage of further training opportunities. The obvious thing to do for such changes to occur is to strengthen the processes of self-reflection and self-confidence in coaching sessions so as to clarify which changes are desired and which situations need to be created to provoke these changes (on undesirable changes in this context, see Schermuly et al., 2014).

Recently, Hudson and Fraley (2015) presented a promising procedure similar to coaching for targeted personality change. Study participants who received support in formulating goals regarding changes in their personality indeed changed in their daily behavior and self-concept across a period of 16 weeks whereas those in the control group did not.

On the basis of the findings presented here, personality changes with the help of coaching seem promising, even if this must be formulated cautiously due to only a few empirical findings. Because people are particularly sensitive to change at a young age and in old age, these age phases seem to be especially suitable for targeted coaching.

Coaching in the Context of an Aging Workforce

The increasing proportion of older people in our society today is also reflected in the age-related composition of the workforce. As shown above, young employees are characterized by a high sensitivity to change in their personality and on average show a high degree of openness to experience. Both suggest that young adults, in particular, may benefit from coaching.

With increasing age, at least until people are about 60 years old, both sensitivity to change and openness to new experiences tend to decrease. This should be taken

into account when coaching individuals of that age group, for example, by increasingly reflecting on the usefulness of the intended changes with the clients.

Perspectives for Coaching to Prompt Personality Development

According to Hennecke et al. (2014), three prerequisites are necessary for changes in personality: Changes must be (1) considered desirable, (2) considered possible, and (3) translated into behavioral habits. Coaching can support this process by making individuals aware of personality change potentials and by concretizing them—for example, by translating them into concrete change goals (Hudson & Fraley, 2015). Coaching can also support people in strengthening the perceived ability for self-regulated personality development. This should also have a positive effect on the self-efficacy of individuals, a personality trait that is associated with numerous positive consequences (Infurna et al., 2013; Specht et al., 2013). If there are desired changes in an individual's behavior, it is important to reinforce these in coaching in order to change behavioral habits that eventually may lead to personality changes.

As promising as these possibilities of coaching are for personality development, it must be clearly stated that we are still at the very beginning regarding specific personality change trainings. There are open questions as to which procedures are actually effective, which personality traits can change in which persons and whether these changes are permanent (Sander et al., 2017). It would also be conceivable not to focus on changing individual personality traits through coaching, but instead to increase the intraindividual variability in personality states. This could increase the ability of people to adapt to specific situations.

A person is neither born to be a leader nor is a person from the very beginning unsuitable for later leadership responsibilities. Rather, research from personality development shows that although personality is relatively stable it is not set in stone and is actually changeable in the long term. This potential for personality change suggests that not only the selection, but also the further development of a person in the face of new challenges should play a special role in the context of leadership. This potential is not yet being fully exploited.

One of the topics for future research will be: How can personality be adapted to current and future professional and private requirements and how can coaching facilitate this to enable people to master difficult situations or major changes?

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Power and Micropolitics as a Topic in Coaching

Wolfgang Scholl and Wolfgang Looss

A Case Study

Jim was the head of the production control department of a plant in a large technology group. After many years, he was finally promoted to divisional manager. His area of responsibility suddenly became more functional, conflict-prone, and a very broad local remit: complex methodological issues, standardization problems between several plants, and the allocation of scarce resources made up the bulk of his work.

He came into coaching because he could not *get his topics into implementation*, as he called it. The department heads directly reporting to him—formerly his colleagues—implemented only a few of his impulses, citing other guidelines and opinions from higher-up in the organization. It quickly became apparent during consultation that although he was somehow familiar with the various coordination processes at this managerial level from observation, the procedures required in his new role seemed to be extremely strange to him. For example, he found it unobjective, unnecessary, and probably also unusual to meet with his divisional manager colleagues for a working lunch and to negotiate with his regionally dispersed plant managers.

The coaching process therefore dealt with acquiring role-relevant micropolitics in the sense of diverse forms of influencing and negotiating. A broader power basis, accepted by important others, first had to be developed because his position alone no longer ensured appropriate implementation. Alliances had to be formed, deals had to be arranged, and relationships had to be cultivated. It was even necessary to defend

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himself against sometimes scheming procedures from the lower levels and the colleagues and to carry out one or another hidden conflict.

Such role expansions also required new value clarifications: The concept of *selective authenticity* (what should I say and when do I better keep silent?) had to be filled with behavior, a new way of dealing with confidential information (to whom should I tell what?) had to be practiced, loyalty conflicts had to be dealt within himself. The ambivalence between the *benefit of the organization* and his own interests had to be resolved.

This case is an example of a concrete competence development within a micropolitical action field.

On the Concept of Micropolitics

Practitioners and academics like to relate their activities to *the well-being, survival, and efficiency of the organization*, but this should not obscure the fact that different interests shape the specialized information processing and the resulting decisions, leading to communication problems, conflicts, and the use of power tactics. For such processes the word *politics* was increasingly used in practice, as the interviews of Dalton (1959) with managers show. The first systematic treatise on this topic was probably written by Burns (1961), who deliberately alluded with the term *micropolitics* to bigger governmental politics. Burns emphasized that the members of the organization and key stakeholders cooperate in providing resources to the organization but compete with each other in the allocation of these resources and the distribution of revenues. This mixture repeatedly leads to political maneuvers, often inspired by situational changes, which in turn drive processes of change. March (1962) sees the key actors in companies as political coalitions that have to be managed thoroughly. Strategic announcements as well as changes in the management board make this visible to the public, such as recently the power struggle between Piech and Winterkorn at VW. The majority of these processes are in organizational *micropolitics more hidden* than in big politics, they penetrate the organization like a fungal mycelium.

Micropolitics is often defined by using power (Pfeffer, 1981; Neuberger, 1995). But good politics is not only about power processes, it is also about information processing, mutual understanding, and trust. The term "micropolitics" suggests that a definition should learn from definitions in political science. Here politics is often defined as "authoritative allocation of scarce resources" (Easton, 1965). This refers to binding decisions on the strategies and goals of the social unit, on the allocation of the necessary resources to get the tasks done (e.g., budgeting, staffing, investments), on the distribution of inducements and contributions (e.g., promotions, thankless tasks), and on changes in power and decision-making positions with which the future allocation can be influenced (especially reorganizations of all kinds). In a social system, binding decisions must be made for persons and groups with different interests so that collective action can be coordinated; yet, consensus on the goals

and the best ways forward cannot be expected (Scharpf, 1973). Despite several areas of consensus, smaller and sometimes larger conflicts are to be expected. They are carried out in the political process—overt or covert, considerate or reckless—and concluded with binding decisions. Politics is indispensable for social systems.

Of course, there are also non-political decision-making processes, namely when the interests to be taken into account or the underlying values have already been clarified and authorized. Therefore, the central decisions are always political, but subordinate decisions can also be politicized by openly or covertly questioning and changing the authorized goals and strategies. Many field studies have shown how personal goals and group interests influence controversial decisions, which tactics and means of power are used in such decisions, and to what extent they are associated with functional or dysfunctional consequences for the organization (Pettigrew, 1973; Ortmann et al., 1990; Scholl, 2004). The main issues examined and discussed were (a) the control and de-qualification of workers (Hildebrandt & Seltz, 1987), (b) the distribution of resources and bonuses beyond official justifications (Pfeffer, 1981), (c) the pursuit of career advantages (Madison et al., 1980), and (d) the introduction of new IT systems (Ortmann et al., 1990; Scholl, 2004).

On the Concept of Power and the Use of Power

Even if micropolitics is not defined by power, it plays a central role in political processes; therefore, the concept of power and the use of power must also be examined more closely. The most widely accepted definition is that of Max Weber: "*Power means every chance to assert one's own will within a social relationship, even against resistance, no matter on what this chance is based*" (Weber, 1972, p. 28, our translation). Power is a potential: Having power gives you a good and secure feeling. It is easier to realize your wishes and you feel less dependent or defenseless. With power, you can achieve various other rewards and fight off various limitations. Research on power as potential (Keltner et al., 2003) shows that greater power generates corresponding positive feelings such as joy, pride, and desire, while lesser power tends to be associated with negative mood, worry, and sadness. In case of conflict, the more powerful react primarily with anger and contempt, while the less powerful react with fear and anxiety (Fig. 1). It is therefore clear that people prefer to have more power and prefer controlling others over being controlled.

If someone has power over others, this does not at all say how that power is used. Power can be used in a respectful, friendly, and community-enhancing way toward others, for example, by giving good advice, helping others, addressing conflict constructively as a common problem, or by working toward the observance of common standards. This type of *impact in line with the interests of the other(s)* is defined as *promotive control* (Scholl, 1999, 2012; Fig. 1). However, power can also be used against the interests of the other(s), which is what many people think of power. Pressure to conform, penalties for not following the whistle of the more
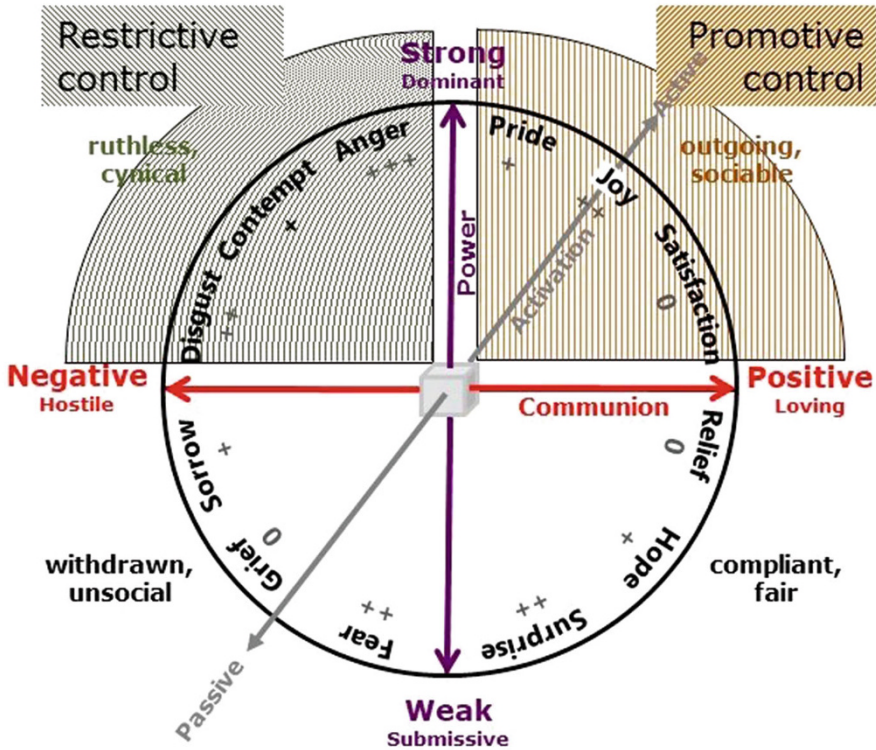
Fig. 1 Basic behavior and emotion dimensions with special reference to the two faces of using power

powerful, ignoring the objections of others, these are all examples of *restrictive control*, *acting against the interests of other(s)*. When looking more closely at restrictive control, one will also recognize a subset of *manipulation* where the *infringement of interests* either *is not noticed* or the *originator remains unknown*. It is very important in micropolitical practice, but there is little systematic research on it.

The distinction between promotive and restrictive control is of fundamental importance, because all human experiences and actions are judged by whether they are perceived as positive or negative for oneself, friendly or hostile, pleasant or unpleasant. The promotive and restrictive dimensional combinations of power and community, shown in Fig. 1, can be traced to emotions, affecting non-verbal and verbal communication, and the assessment of behavior and personality (Scholl, 2013).

In order to restrict others against their will, harsh or manipulative means are used, i.e. more restrictive tactics, because the other(s) must be restricted in their action possibilities; if not, they are likely to follow their own will. On the other hand, promotive control is usually associated with soft tactics that respect or increase the

Power tactic	Reported cases	Dark: % restrictive control
Threat / Punishment	49 of 51	96,1
Order / Command	161 of 187	86,1
Accomplished facts	36 of 46	78,3
Assertiveness	98 of 137	71,5
Deception / Lying	13 of 19	68,4
Coalition building	20 of 34	58,8
Referring to a norm	17 of 40	42,5
Ingratiation	3 of 8	37,5
Reciprocity	5 of 14	35,7
Compromise	3 of 10	30,0
Promise	3 of 11	27,3
Request	12 of 45	26,7
Reasoning	52 of 221	23,5
Hinting	17 of 84	20,2
Consultation	0 of 1	0

Fig. 2 Power tactics, ordered by restrictiveness. (Data from Buschmeier, 1995, p. 161 ff.; tactics perceived as more manipulative are written in italics)

autonomy of the other(s). Figure 2 shows a list of the most common power tactics and their frequency resp. likelihood to be used as restrictive or promotive control.

The measures addressed in the initial case study can be classified on this continuum of restrictiveness. Relationship building includes especially the lowest five tactics, from consultation to promises and requests. Coalition building is directly named. If neither constructive solutions nor acceptable compromises succeed, then in many cases, a change to restrictive tactics is likely, which then may be reciprocated with the same or other available means. Often, such a power play escalates and causes lasting damage to the mutual relations without improving results (Scholl, 2004, 2012). Most difficult is the necessity to defend oneself against scheming activities, if they are noticed at all. In such situations, general power potentials such as good relations and a good reputation as being competent and cooperative help most, because intrigues are then less effective.

Consequences of Exerting Promotive or Restrictive Control

Considering the diversity of power tactics, the more restrictive and harsh ones are experienced as violating your interests, while the softer ones are seen as promotive, respecting, or even furthering your interests. So, it is to be expected that the latter should generate positive feelings and reactions, while the violation of interests

through restrictive control should generate negative feelings. This has been clearly confirmed empirically (Buschmeier, 1995; Scholl, 2012). As a consequence, the relationship deteriorates when restrictive control is exerted and improves with promotive control.

Promotive control is likely to be associated with joy, gratitude, relief, awe, or even positive surprise. Restrictive control, on the other hand, triggers either anger and feelings of revenge in those affected. As long as they feel strong enough they are motivated to strike back. But if they feel weaker or completely powerless, they experience fear and sadness (Fig. 1). This is in line with the integrated reactance and helplessness theory (Wortman & Brehm, 1975), that people initially react to restrictions with reactance, i.e. with active or passive resistance. Those affected try to defend themselves directly and openly. If this is too risky, they secretly do what they themselves want to do, or try to fight back against the other person at better occasions. If this repeatedly fails, the resistance will weaken and then resignation, inner retreat, and helplessness will occur (Scholl, 2012).

Whether power is used as promotive or restrictive control, that is not independent of the actual power differential. Kipnis (1976) has shown experimentally that superior power increases the temptation for the power wielder to enforce personal ideas and not to respect others' interests, if restrictive means are available, i.e. to exercise restrictive instead of promotive control. This was accompanied by several cognitive and emotional changes: persons, who employed superior restrictive means, attributed the performance of those affected primarily to their intervention, while persons with softer, more promotive means regarded these people as fundamentally involved. The former justified their restrictive actions by devaluing those affected and upgraded themselves; thus, they were not only the more powerful, but in their eyes also the better ones. As a result, they distanced themselves from the people affected. Kipnis (1976) summarizes his investigations with the famous saying of Baron Acton:

> Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely. (Dalberg-Acton, 1907, p. 504)

In further studies, Kipnis' findings were confirmed and expanded: superior power induces not only moral but also material corruption (Georgesen & Harris, 1998; Mitchell et al., 1998; Scholl & Schermuly, 2020).

The consequences of using restrictive control are particularly serious for the respective social system. Its exercise hinders coordination, distorts knowledge acquisition, and thus reduces effectiveness, because the focus shifts away from the real problem to the question of who can retain control. Already the Groupthink investigations of failed decisions (Janis, 1982; Peterson et al., 1998) have shown how directive leadership, pressures to conform, and thought control, i.e. several forms of restrictive control, lead to failures of top-decisions. When promotive control is exerted, on the other hand, the interests and opinions of the others are respected, so that differences of opinion and interests are discussed more intensively in order to find a good solution for all involved. This leads to positive consequences

for the acquisition of knowledge and an appropriate coordination of efforts, and thus increases the probability of success (Scholl, 2004, 2012).

Consequences of Micropolitics

Like power, micropolitics is usually associated with negative consequences. But Burns (1961) already pointed out possible positive consequences, because economically necessary adjustments are often only realized with the help of micropolitics against persistent forces. In a survey of managers (Madison et al., 1980), the following consequences of micropolitics for organizations were more often mentioned: Negative ones, like distraction from organizational goals (45%), misuse of resources (32%), struggles, disruptions (22%), and tensions, frustrations (20%); but also more positive ones were mentioned like achieving goals and completing tasks (26%), functioning of the organization (26%), getting to know ideas and people (20%), and coordination and communication (18%). For individuals, micropolitics appear rather positive, but risky: career success (61%) versus loss of credibility and power (39%) or even downgrading or dismissal (31%).

For a more precise understanding of micropolitics and its consequences, a theoretical analysis is necessary. Each organization has different participants or stakeholders such as managers, employees, shareholders, customers, suppliers, lenders, etc. (Donaldson & Preston, 1995). They all are mutually dependent on the organization and at least indirectly on each other. In game theoretic terms, these mutual dependencies are dilemma relationships which have the structure of a prisoner's dilemma: the stakeholders can profit through mutual cooperation, but they compete for the distribution of larger inducements and lower contributions (March & Simon, 1958). Because of their mutual dependencies, cooperation is necessary and more or less positive for all involved but every participant could be even better off by one-sided defection, i.e. giving less of one's resources and getting more of the cake than the other(s). In concrete situations, cooperation entails the mutual use of promotive control while defection is a case of restrictive control, often a manipulative one. Because situations may be complex, decisions difficult, and consequences uncertain, all have an incentive for micropolitical maneuvers to secure one's own advantage and to avoid to be exploited oneself. Adding to that general dilemma for all participants, management and staff are involved in a second dilemma relationship. On the one hand, they represent the organization to the outside participants and work for the benefit of their organization. On the other hand, they themselves are in a dilemma relationship with the organization and may work for their personal advantage. Every decision about organizational objectives and their appropriate implementation can be made with a view on the organization's benefit as well on one's own benefit, i.e. managers and employees have not only dilemma relationships with external persons and groups but also dilemma relationships within themselves between their dual roles as organizational agents and as entitled participants. This entanglement of the two dilemmas in internal and external relationships

is the actual basis for micropolitics: What is seen and declared by whom as advantageous for the organization and what is intended to serve one's own interests?

The higher the position in the company the more complex, difficult, and consequential are the decisions; so, it is no wonder that micropolitical maneuvers are here more frequent (Gandz & Murray, 1980); this was also evident in the initial example. Moreover, the coveted positions of power are becoming increasingly scarce toward the top and thus are intensifying the competition between managers. Micropolitics that primarily serve their own advantage will be very covert or manipulative, because otherwise strong counter-reactions are to be expected. Only if there are larger power differences in their favor, for example, in the owner or chairman position, they hardly must fear countermeasures; decisions are then partly made *by sovereign arbitrariness*.

In most cases it is more worthwhile for everyone to cooperate, i.e. to exert promotive instead of restrictive control and to manage conflicts constructively, because cooperative collaboration mobilizes more information and sharpens the view on the legitimacy of the respective claims of the participants. Investigations of many innovation cases revealed that micropolitical processes that went hand in hand with constructive, cooperative conflict management, led to innovation success with above-average frequency, while micropolitical processes that were associated with enforcement of special interests often caused mutual power struggles and ended in failure (Scholl, 2004). Recent studies on innovation processes have confirmed this and highlighted the positive function of promotive control in the form of constructive conflict management (Scholl, 2009, 2019).

Power and Micropolitics as Topics in Coaching

As shown in the case described at the beginning, micropolitical issues in coaching often appear in the form of new qualification gaps. Not only do new role requirements regularly emerge during promotion, but roles also change during increased turbulence with changing structures, differing procedures, new technologies, and business processes. New roles practically always require the actors to adopt new behavior in staff management. In addition, new questions around values arise with new positions or changed functions: Value-driven action requires clarifying new philosophical, ideological, or ethical-normative orientations. In the face of new dilemmas that the actors have not yet dealt with, internal stability has yet to be established (Baddeley & James, 1987). As a secondary consequence of such role changes, the persons first experience all kinds of insufficiencies, emotional upsets, and cognitive perplexity. This is a classic situation relevant for coaching.

The second major field of micropolitical issues in coaching arises from the management of personal stress situations that develop with the increased occurrence of hostile maneuvers in the organization: If turbulences cannot be overcome in a company, if change management is carried out in a dilettantish manner, and the exercise of restrictive control seems to be the only way to enforce the intended

change, the organization will suffer from a wide range of insults, violations of interests, and annoyance among the players. It is not uncommon that *organizational squalidness* develops. The consequences are all kinds of intrigues, cases of mobbing, small and larger malevolences in dealing with each other, increased destructive competitive maneuvers, incomprehensible personnel decisions, etc.

Such phenomena of increased destructive dynamics generally lead to an increase of the neurotic sediment in an organization which exists anyway. This creates a micropolitically relevant action sphere on the personal side, which now makes up a considerable part of the coaching sessions: the people concerned initially experience feelings of victimization, helplessness, and reduced efficiency. Coaching can be the first place of relief; crisis intervention becomes necessary. But then the question of micropolitics and the handling of power quickly comes into play: How can one protect oneself against such mess? No matter whether it is about suffering under the bossing of overburdened superiors, coping with scheming maneuvers among colleagues, or overcoming stalled refusals among groups of employees: what is needed are behavioral maneuvers from the micropolitical toolbox that one would not have needed in normal times (Fairholm, 1993). Opposing forces, competition, and experienced power tactics require procedural answers that are not or not sufficiently practiced, such that their emotional background is unknown and their value-based anchoring is still unclear.

In the deliberation phase, the micropolitical perspective becomes relevant (Lueger, 1992). The first step is to sift through organizational actor landscapes and interest panoramas: who wants to achieve what? Concentrations of power need to be identified: how come everyone is accepting this? The remaining solidarity nuclei have to be investigated: who else is at my side? Who can be won over for cooperation? And it must be worked out how to act on the stage (Ferris et al., 2000): Which kind of conflict management is possible and useful? For example, does mediation already exist in the company as an organizational procedure? What micropolitical maneuvers of self-defense could be considered? How could my self-concept change with unfamiliar action patterns? In the course of coaching, it is not uncommon for the client to experience an intensive growth spurt in the areas of personal competence, emotional experience, and ethical value clarification, including the discussion of unexpected questions of personal meaning.

The third important field of micropolitical relevance in coachings is found in family businesses. When family issues arise in the company and company issues in the family, complexity increases through context commingling. The dynamics of interests, intentions, worldviews, procedural patterns, and role handling become more potent. Whether the non-family CEO is informally pressured to make certain decisions by some of the family tribes, whether an entire management team is drawn into a sibling conflict among owners, or whether hostile tribes compete in the marketplace with similar companies: The processes are often exceeding in their diversity and sometimes bizarre dynamics, and occasionally, they find their way into the media. From a micropolitical point of view, a sequence of often powerful maneuvers with destructive effects is created. This is no longer about exerting promotive control; this is about very tangible direct exercises of restrictive control.

Because of the intimacy of the family sector, the cases often only come into coaching when they have reached a certain degree of maturity after long phases of secret and conflict-avoiding actions. In coaching, either people from the company or from the family circle are *first clients* and seek support: Here too, it is basically necessary to sort out power fields and main actors, interests, and subgroups. Then, the—often protracted and intertwined—conflict histories must be understandably processed and recognized. And before any action can be thought of, the person(s) concerned must be assisted in sorting out their emotional states. Only then can be determined— analogous to other cases—which micropolitical maneuvers are worth considering and how the necessary behavior can be practiced.

Conclusion

(Micro)-politics and the use of power resources are necessary and not per se negative in their consequences. It is more important that the interests involved, including one's own, are respected as far as possible by exercising mutual promotive control for constructive conflict management (e.g., Fisher et al., 2011).

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Problems of Teamwork as a Topic in Coaching

Jürgen Wegge and Petra Kemter-Hofmann

A Real-Life Example: When Is Team Coaching Desired?

Felix has been a team leader of 12 employees for 6 months. The team was newly formed at the start of a completed merger. He has already worked with several members of this team, others joined in the merger process. At the beginning of his work, he clearly communicated that he valued quality and punctuality as important performance criteria. After a first interim review, he noticed that the performances of the team members varied substantially. Furthermore, coordination problems between team members exist as well as little support between team members coming from different pre-merger organizations. In daily communication, the orientation towards the past of team members is gaining more and more space. Since appeals on his part and a team meeting on the problems ended in an unproductive apportioning of blame, a coach was called in.

What Is Team Coaching?

According to Schreyögg (2015) the term coaching has been appearing in the management literature since the eighties. It is used and interpreted in many different ways. Initially often used as individual coaching, also group and team coaching is increasingly finding its way into organizations (despite all critics who regard coaching as a two-way relationship). In practice, these two settings are sometimes mixed up. We follow Rauen and define team coaching as a form of group coaching in which a group of people who are in a professional, functional context is coached

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in their organizational environment (see Rauen, 2002, p. 516). Brinkmann (2000, p. 82 ff.) describes as potential causes for team coaching, for example, personal conflicts in teams, stress and competitive pressure, lack of motivation/ communication and cooperation, lack of willingness to deal with conflict, lack of decision-making ability, lack of sense of unity, insufficient knowledge of methods/ instruments and unclear role definitions. Greif (2008) emphasizes the important role of self-reflection in coaching. For team coaching, this particularly concerns the self-concept of the "group." In contrast to individual coaching, there are two main differences: on the one hand, the interaction/communication of the team members becomes relevant, which leads to a continuous dynamic change. On the other hand, the participation of both the individual and the group level and their alignment with organizational goals is an issue. The work of the team coach, therefore, focuses on *several levels and perspectives at the same time* and this with changing dependencies. To illustrate this further, Eidenschenk (2014) gives three different consulting foci with reference to Luhmann: The factual dimension, which includes the primary team task or goal, the social dimension as a dimension of cooperation, which is always to be seen in relation to the task, and the time dimension, which is connected with various paradoxes, i.e., contradictions, dilemmas, etc., and how to deal with them.

A common mistake in team coaching is the overrepresentation and processing of the social dimension by the coach. The coaching process (including analysis of the problem area, intervention, and evaluation) results in an almost infinite variety of methods due to the described multi-level approach and the three consulting dimensions. In practice, there are, for example, methods for setting group goals, clarifying relationships, and developing decision-making patterns and basic attitudes. Whether rather systemic approaches, NLP, provocative approaches or other models are used (see Schmidt-Tanger, 2003) depends on the coach and their theoretical foundation. Important (independent of the choice of the concrete method) are the two principles for effective group training according to Thornton (2010): Firstly "Keeping the group safe enough to enable learning" and secondly "Encouraging curiosity and exchange of views."

This brief overview shows that team coaching is very popular. Depending on the basic approach and mission statement (e.g., NLP, systems theory, role theory, stress theory, change management, learning theory), there are many suggestions as to what should be measured and then done in each individual case. In the following, we focus on the central starting points for successful teamwork that have been identified in social and organizational psychological research.

Factors of Successful Teamwork

In organizational and social psychological research, various models for the best possible design and use of group work have been developed and empirically tested (Wegge, 2004, 2014; van Dick et al., 2018). A model that claims to be universally
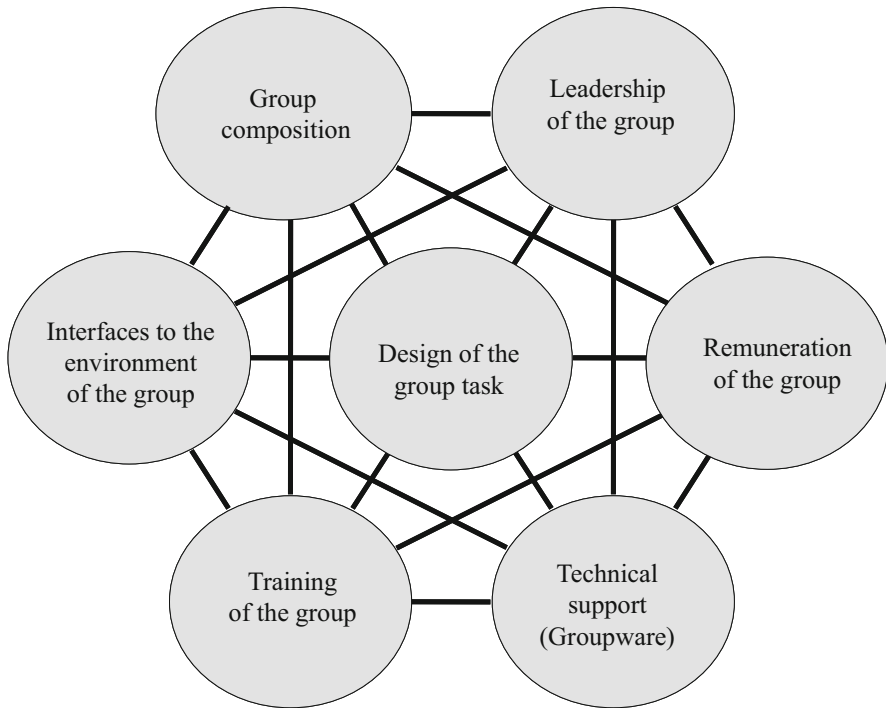
Fig. 1 Central starting points for the design of group work according to Wegge (2014)

valid was presented by Scholl (2003). He proposes that each working group will benefit from the use of participatory goal setting as well as professional moderation and continuous reflection on the results and work processes achieved. There are numerous findings for the correctness of this statement (DeChurch & Mesmer-Magnus, 2010). Among other things, it has been proven that groups achieve better performance when they communicate previously undivided (not known to all) task-relevant knowledge in an open and structured way and when—as a consequence—shared mental models and knowledge about the knowledge of the other group members are created. In line with Scholl's view, the design areas listed in Fig. 1 are to be regarded as further, central parameters which should be taken into account for the best possible design of all forms of group work (see Wegge, 2014).

For an overview of the effectiveness of team training, the meta-analysis of Salas et al. (2008) is relevant, in which findings from 45 studies were evaluated. Here, for example, average effect sizes ($r = 0.33$) were shown for team performance, whereby these were greater in intact teams ($r = 0.49$) than in "ad hoc" teams of previously unknown persons ($r = 0.31$). Teams with more than 5 members benefited from team training more ($r = 0.44$) than smaller teams ($r = 0.28$ for dyads and $r = 0.34$ for teams with 3–5 people). Overall, according to the results of this meta-analysis,

Table 1 General advantages and disadvantages of group work as a starting point for promoting work motivation, health and performance (after Wegge, 2004, 2014)

	Advantages	Disadvantages
Division of labor	– Reduction of individual demands due to division of labour (type division) – Use of expertise through the use of specific roles – Reduction of strain	– Production blockades – Unnecessary duplication of work and synchronization problems – Error escalation due to too close technical coupling
Information processing	– Error compensation through the aggregation of opinions – Active error correction and cognitive conflicts – Learning by observation – Formation of transactive memory structures	– High interaction complexity in larger groups – Group polarization and group thinking – Consistency in decision errors – Late (sparse) communication of undivided knowledge
Motivation processes	– Promotion of motivation by the presence of others (spectator; co-actor) – Koehler effect – Sacrifice oneself for a bad group – Competition with other groups (social laboring)	– Abuse of power – Social anxiety – Social loafing – Free-riding – Not wanting to be the sucker – Soldiering

12–19% of the variance in team performance is explained by team training (whereby "outdoor" training was not included in this analysis).

A comprehensive discussion of the other design fields in Fig. 1 is not possible here for reasons of space. We refer to the relevant reviews (Wegge, 2014; van Dick et al., 2018). In the following, we take a closer look at the general advantages and disadvantages of group work, because these will often be a topic in the context of team coaching (see Table 1).

Division of Labor

According to Hacker (2005) two basic types of division of labor can be described: the quantity division and the type division. With quantity division, the entire workload is broken down into similar subtasks, which are then processed by several people. If the same work order is divided into different subtasks and given to different persons for processing, it is called a type division. With this form of division of labor, advantages are to be expected when the work orders become very complex but can be divided in a sensible way, and when the demands on individual skills and knowledge of the working persons become too high without a type division of the order. A skillful use of different skills, knowledge (expertise) and needs of individual group members results in performance advantages compared to individual work. The successful execution of the work activity in a team can also

lead to a reduction in individual demands (compared to the undivided work), which can be reflected, for example, in fewer musculoskeletal disorders. The intelligent planning and implementation of efficient forms of quantity and type division of work as well as the best possible organizational support for their effectiveness (e.g., through personnel selection, training, machines, and tools) have therefore been a central concern of research since the beginnings of ergonomics and work psychology. If, on the other hand, mistakes are made in the division of labor within the team, production blockades (e.g., because required tools are used by others) or unnecessary duplication of work occurs. Furthermore, a (too) close technical coupling between workstations can be a problem because the compensation of errors that have occurred is not easily achieved, and disturbances then propagate quickly in the system (error escalation).

Information Processing

The possibility of dividing work into groups can lead to groups achieving results that cannot be provided by a *single* person or the same number of people at the same time. It is therefore hardly surprising that such group advantages were also expected for task types in which the processing of information is in the foreground, e.g., joint brainstorming or problem-solving. However, here too, research shows that there can be both advantages and disadvantages compared to individual work. Possible advantages arise from processes of error compensation (by aggregating individual opinions in estimation tasks) and error correction (by an appropriate discussion of different opinions). In addition, teams can benefit from information processing through observational learning and the formation of transactive memory structures (this is shared knowledge about who performs a subtask particularly well or poorly). On the other hand, the complexity of interaction in working groups increases exponentially with the number of members. If all members of a group are to communicate with each other, the formula "$n(n - 1)/2$" results in ten different interactions in groups of five people, in groups of ten people there are already 45 and in groups of 15 people there are already 105 different interactions. There is also ample evidence that groups tend to make more extreme or risky decisions than individuals under certain conditions. Many experiments have also investigated the question of how "correct" knowledge should be *distributed* in a group so that it is ultimately reflected appropriately in the group result. According to this, groups tend to communicate very intensively about the knowledge already shared by everyone beforehand, although it would generally be more beneficial for performance in problem-solving if undivided information from the group members had been expressed by then.

Loss of Motivation and Gains in Motivation

Based on the current findings, four specific types of motivation gains in groups can be identified. These are defined in such a way that a direct comparison between individual and group with otherwise identical tasks results in an increase in individual work motivation in the group situation. These four phenomena are:

- The "*mere presence*" effect, a promotion of motivation solely through the presence of others, especially for simple, well-practiced tasks.
- The "*Koehler effect*," a contagion or build-up effect in direct cooperation when the strong person is about 25% better than the weak person.
- The "*social compensation*" effect of sacrificing oneself for a poor group when the reasons for the poor performance of team members are acceptable, and.
- The "*social laboring*" effect, a motivating factor based on the fact that as a team you want to be better than another group with which you are in competition.

Five different types of *loss of motivation* in group work can also be differentiated. In a direct comparison between individual and group, a reduction in individual work motivation in the group situation can be observed for otherwise identical tasks. These five phenomena are:

- *Social loafing*, a rather non-intentional reduction of one's own work motivation with little self-regulation in a situation in which one's own contributions to the group result are not or at least hardly identifiable and assessable.
- *Social anxiety*, a reduction in work motivation and performance due to inhibitions and disorders, induced by the presence of other (important) people who can evaluate the person's behavior.
- *Free riding*, a more deliberate form of motivation and performance reduction due to the person's decision not to make any further effort, because it is assumed that their own performance results are superfluous or unimportant for the group result.
- "*not wanting to be the sucker*" ("sucker effect"), a decrease in one's own work motivation and performance due to the observation that other members of one's own group show (over a longer period of time) the behavior of free riders.
- *Soldiering*, a deliberate reduction in motivation and performance as an expression of protest against a person or group that makes unjustified performance demands.

How to influence working groups in practice in such a way that the possible advantages of teamwork in terms of division of labor, information processing and work motivation become more likely and the corresponding disadvantages are prevented is a really complex problem. However, there is a great deal of evidence on what the most important approaches and instruments are:

- The design of the group task.
- The composition of the group.
- The continuous measurement of relevant team processes.
- The agreement on performance goals and continuous performance feedback.
- The intensity and nature of communication and reflection in the team.

- The promotion of identification with the team.
- Developing and rewarding appropriate group standards.
- The technical support and training of the group.
- The design of interfaces and competition with other groups.
- Improving the constructive handling of conflicts in teams.
- The use of modern forms of leadership (e.g., shared leadership).

Finally, we present a rather complex intervention, Participatory Productivity Management (PPM), which is capable of positively influencing a number of these processes. This intervention uses key findings on the impact of goals and feedback at work. In line with the many findings on the goal-setting theory for human task performance (Wegge, 2015), it aims to get the group to set difficult, specific group goals and to pursue these goals in the long term.

PPM To Promote Learning, Work Motivation, and Productivity in Teamwork

The application of goal setting in teams requires an appropriate measurement of the team's work performance. This is by no means trivial, especially in the case of complex group tasks with a multitude of performance facets. First, it is important to *fully* map all performance facets relevant to teamwork using suitable indicators. Because what is not measured cannot be reported back and agreed on in goals. In order to achieve this, it is necessary first to disclose the most important organizational goals in quantitative and qualitative terms and to establish a consensus on the evaluation or priority of these goals, so that it is clear to every member of the team whether or to what extent, for example, the quantity or quality of performance is more important. Also, what should *not* happen should be clarified here. Finally, it is crucial that employees have continuous feedback at work that shows them how their behavior should be changed accordingly. The use of the PPM management system offers the best prerequisites for ensuring that the discussion process required for this in the organization is successful and that a long-term increase in productivity and quality occurs in working groups. The basic idea of this system is shown in Fig. 2.

To develop a PPM system with *one* working group, several group discussions are necessary. Average values from several projects show that this requires about 30 working hours with the entire group. Once the measurement system is in place, data on these indicators of group productivity will be collected. They are discussed jointly in the group based on regularly provided feedback reports. The PPM method has been applied in numerous professional fields (industry, administration, services) and in various organizational contexts. Scientifically sound evaluation results on productivity effects in a before-and-after comparison are available from 83 use cases. In a meta-analysis of these studies, an average effect strength of $d = 1.44$ could be determined (Pritchard et al., 2008). Furthermore, it was found that the productivity effects of PPM remain constant over time.
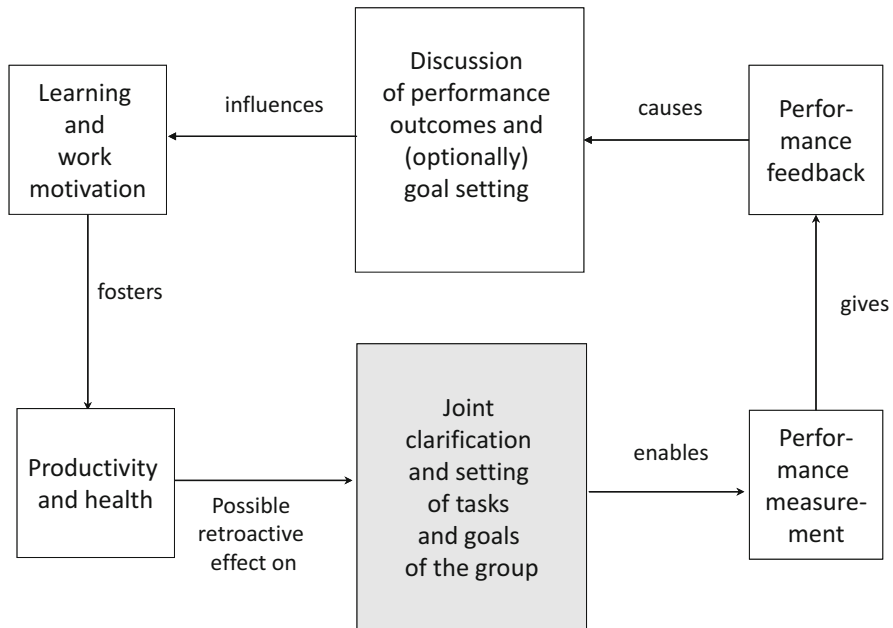
Fig. 2 Illustration of the assumed mechanisms of action of PPM (after Wegge, 2004)

Research on PPM has also identified conditions that are both conducive and obstructive to the success of this complex intervention. PPM works particularly well if you have stable groups with little interdependence, in companies with rather little decision autonomy ("high centralization"), if meaningful group tasks are available and if the basic PPM model is adhered to. Rather obstructive are limited room for maneuver of the working groups, competing feedback systems (like remuneration), "clumsy" moderation, a low desire for personal responsibility, more frequent changes in the feedback system and when companies find themselves in situations of upheaval. Nevertheless, if the conditions for using PPM are favorable, it is probably one of the most powerful management systems for teams known and tested today. The great success of PPM in group work can be easily explained if one considers that the system contains elements that can sustainably promote work motivation in groups (like participation of employees, agreement on challenging goals, continuous feedback) as well as elements that support independent learning within the group, like by encouraging the group to discuss and try out efficient work strategies. PPM enables working groups to determine, in a largely self-organized manner, how their path towards the goals jointly agreed by the group and management must be shaped. The introduction or use of PPM should therefore also be considered as a possible intervention in team coaching.

Outlook and Open Questions

Even well-designed teamwork is associated with numerous problems that can be successfully tackled by coaching the team. To cope with and prevent such problems, it is important to use methods and tools that best suit the team's circumstances. Unfortunately, to the best of our knowledge, no systematic research has yet been conducted into which methods work best for which teams under which conditions. The development of such findings will also by no means be easy, since in group research—for good reason—at least 42 different forms of teamwork must be differentiated (Hollenbeck et al., 2012). As a rule, the specifics of individual team forms should therefore always be considered before applying certain findings on the determinants of effective group work in coaching practice. In our practical example presented in the introduction, it would be advisable to first obtain an overview of the most urgent problems in the team on the basis of the three general starting points for promoting work motivation, health and learning in teams (division of labor, information processing, motivation). A complex intervention such as PPM should not be proposed or used until it has been checked whether the necessary boundary conditions are suitable. Other, less complex and also more short-term interventions designed to improve the division of labor and role clarity, the exchange of information and reflection, as well as to reduce motivation losses and increase motivation gains in the team are described in more detail both in team research and in other chapters of this volume (e.g., the chapters by Grant & Antoni or West et al.) For future research, we would like to see systematic comparisons made here. As long as research on team coaching is still in its infancy (at least the first meta-analyses for dyadic coaching are already available), we believe that great caution is necessary. A simple transfer of successful methods and approaches from the dyadic level to the team level is not justified (see Wegge, 2004).

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Professionalization in Coaching

Christoph Schmidt-Lellek and Beate Fietze

A Practical Example

Madeleine, a publishing house editor, in her early 40s, was immediately looking for coaching support after taking on a management position in a small scientific publishing house. She had given up her previous position in a traditional, internationally active, very conservative publishing company, mainly because it was run in a rather authoritarian-patriarchal manner and because she could not develop further in it. In the new position, she now found a rather unstructured team situation, characterized by an anti-authoritarian communication culture but obviously full of conflict, which had caused the failure of two predecessors in management. Madeleine now feared that she herself would fail in her new task and doubted whether she had made the right decision by moving to this publishing house, especially as she had not had any management experience so far. So now she wanted to learn in coaching how to understand and shape her leadership tasks and expressed the wish to the coach: "Tell me what to do, you are the expert!" However, the coach did not respond with advice, but rather with questions about how she had experienced leadership in earlier contexts, starting at home, school, and university, in various internships and in her former publishing house; he went on looking at the values or ideals she had in mind in this respect, and whether she had met role models for them, and finally what attitudes and behavior she thought would suit her at all with her temperament, values, and potential. In the course of this work, it became clear that

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Madeleine was above all concerned with a good balance between guideline competence, collegiality, facilitation, and control and that she hoped to find a connection to the existing communication culture. But she had hardly seen any positive examples of this, especially in her last job of many years. On the basis of this objective, a number of concrete procedures could now be discussed and practiced and checked in one's own everyday practice, e.g., with the help of numerous tips, questionnaires and other coaching tools from the book "Coaching for the newly appointed manager" (Schreyögg, 2008). After all, the client quickly experienced a great deal of recognition from all sides, although some conflicts of jurisdiction persisted, and she felt increasingly secure in her new role.

Introduction: The Importance of the Topic for Coaching

The above case study is intended to illustrate that coaching as individual career-related advice is not primarily aimed at conveying expert knowledge as in a further education course or training. Rather, coaching is intended to activate the client's self-reflection through dialogical interaction and to support them in checking, correcting, or expanding their patterns of perception, thinking, and action by reflecting on their own resources and potential. However, the expertise of the coach is also important, as it can enrich this process with specialist and experiential knowledge. Consequently, the professional actions of coaches must be located in a spectrum from process support to expert advice [cf. the concept of "complementary advice" by Königswieser et al. (2006)]. This will be discussed in this chapter.

Coaching moves in the field of professions, i.e., professions in which people work with people about their problems with whom they themselves have difficulties in acting (this includes lawyers, doctors, psychotherapists, etc.). Professions are personal services that require the active participation of the client and take place in a specifically designed relationship.

But coaching, unlike these professions, is not protected by state laws; there is no state license and no public mandate and thus no defined monopoly for this professional activity. Although coaching is not a profession in the strict sense, we can nevertheless speak of a clearly advancing professionalization of the coaching format. This can be seen "in the growth of subject-specific knowledge generation and academization of training and further education as well as in the expansion and intensification of the degree of organization of all actors involved" (Fietze, 2017, p. 11). The quantity and variety of offers, areas of application, topics, and methods can hardly be grasped anymore, as can the attempts to structure the field, e.g., by founding professional and trade associations. Efforts to provide scientific support, e.g., in the form of effectiveness studies, have also grown in many ways.

This makes it even more important to reflect on the conceptual foundations of coaching: What are we talking about when we talk about coaching? How can it be distinguished from other formats of professional consulting? Which basic concepts and which competences are to be assumed or demanded of professional coaches?

How can professional coaching be described and distinguished from "charlatanry" (i.e., from a seeming quality without any real professional substance) (Kühl, 2008, p. 88)? Since there are no generally binding, legally established definitions and quality standards as in other professions such as medicine and psychotherapy, coaches and their professional associations are challenged to develop these themselves and thus create an orientation for practitioners and scientists as well as potential users of coaching.

For coaching—understood as an open dialogue space—the challenge of professionally informed self-reflection with regard to concepts, methods and in particular value orientations, which (especially in postmodern cultural conditions) have to be questioned, again and again, is particularly important. The goal is not only the professional development of the coaches but also the cultivation of coaching as a *space for reflection*, because as Greif (2008) has pointed out, coaching can be understood above all as guidance for "result-oriented self-reflection."

When we now speak of "professionalization," two topics can be considered: on the one hand, the development of coaching as a *profession* and on the other hand the development of coaches in their *professional actions*, in their professionalism. This chapter will focus on the latter. The following section first contains some explanations from the perspective of the sociology of professions to clarify the context of this debate.

Relevant Concepts

Profession, Professionalization, Professionalism

Within the system of the social division of labor, the professions represent a special form of organization of gainful employment, which differs from other forms by a special status of exclusivity and autonomy (Evetts, 2003). They occupy a middle and go-between position between market orientation and state orientation, between pure profit-making and purely bureaucratic rationality (Parsons, 1964). The society grants the professions the privilege of collegial self-regulation (Rüschemeyer, 1983) and grants them a legally protected market monopoly for their area of responsibility. The relative autonomy of the professional, both in relation to market demand by individual clients (*client autonomy*) and in relation to other nonprofessional actors, especially in relation to the state (*organizational autonomy*), forms the basis of the working alliance between professional and client, which is based on trust.

The legitimation for granting these privileges is derived from the professions' processing of socially relevant problems in a way that is oriented towards the common good, and that goes beyond selfish or group-related interests: For example, the lawyer not only represents the particular interests of their client, but also supports the administration of justice in their country, and the doctor not only treats their own patients but promotes the health system as a whole. The professionals act as trustees of differentiated stocks of special knowledge (Schütz & Luckmann, 1979) and their

expert application in the area of responsibility they claim. A scientific orientation of professional activities is constitutive here, i.e., the professionals perform a kind of "translation work" in that general knowledge acquired in an academic education can be integrated into the problem solving of the respective individual case.

The principle of collegiality assumes that professionals are, in principle, equal regarding their technical competence. They determine the contents and forms of vocational training and evaluate the performance characterizing their profession by means of internal professional examination procedures. Their assessment is based solely on professional, ethical standards and the quality of the professional work. Violation of the professional, ethical standards can, in extreme cases, lead to exclusion from the professional association and prohibition from practicing the profession (IOBC, 2019, p. 11 f.). Professionalism—in coaching as in other professions—is thus demonstrated by the extent to which the professional actions meet the requirements applicable to the professional community.

The respective claims to the competence of the various professions are not isolated in the social space, but are related to each other in a competitive context within the system of professions (Abbott, 1988). Social change is leading to ever new forms of division of labor and market differentiation and, as a result, to new forms of professional activity—today more than ever. The differentiation and professionalization of occupational activities is not, however, an inevitable evolutionary process but is driven by the strategies of acquiring and securing the status of competing groups. This competition for the recognition of the claim to jurisdiction for a defined type of problem applies to all professions, even to the established professions, whose exclusive right of representation can always be called into question by neighboring or newly emerging service providers (at least on the margins or in some areas). This is especially true for newly emerging professionalization projects such as coaching. The distinction between coaching and other forms of counselling—such as mentoring, supervision, organizational development or mediation—has still not been clarified, let alone consolidated.

Models of Professional Advice (According to E. H. Schein)

The professional's attitude towards each client, their handling of scientific knowledge and the nature of the relationship between them will vary, depending on the concepts and attitude of the professional and depending on the context and the client's concern. For example, someone who needs purely factual information will approach the expert responsible for this with a different expectation than someone who first wants to investigate what a sometimes only vaguely perceived problem actually consists of and how it can be narrowed down. For these differences, E. H. Schein (1999) has formulated the following three basic models of consultancy and explained them with reference to organizational consultancy, which is also transferable to coaching:

1. *The Expert Model, Consulting as Information Procurement*: The client knows the problem and knows what information or service he needs for its solution, which the consultant should provide him. According to Schein, the problem with this model, which is based on objectifiable factual knowledge of experts, is reflected in the "frequent dissatisfaction with consultants and the low implementation rate of their recommendations" (Schein, 1999). This may be due, among other things, to the fact that the client delegates their power to the advisor, thereby becoming dependent and, in retrospect, resentful about not implementing the recommendations.

2. *The Doctor–Patient Model*: The client feels a problem ("symptoms"), but does not know its causes and possible solutions. The consultant is therefore entrusted with the "diagnosis" of the problem and with its "treatment" or solution, although they are dependent on the client's cooperation. With a professional diagnosis, such as based on questionnaires or interviews, and with a prescription of treatments, the organizational consultant is given even more power and responsibility for what happens. In this model, there is apparently a particular problem in that a "prescription" for the system to be advised remains a foreign body, either because of a diagnostic process "systematic distortions occur" which impair the perception and assessment of a situation; or because the resources for implementing the recommended changes are lacking or because they are experienced as not being appropriate to the respective corporate culture.

3. *The Process Consulting Model*: Here, the client retains responsibility for their problem, even if it is not yet clear to them. The counselor supports them in their perception, description, and evaluation in the respective context in order to understand it and to be able to meet it appropriately. "Process consulting is the establishment of a relationship with the client that allows the client to perceive, understand and react to process events occurring in his internal and external environment in order to improve the situation as he defines it" (loc. Cit., p. 39). In this model, the consultant does not primarily appear in their *professional competence in terms of* content, but rather in their *process competence*: they "do not necessarily have to be an expert (...) in solving the problems to be discovered" (loc. Cit., p. 35). In this respect, the counselor should start from their ignorance and express this (on the meaning of ignorance see Looss, 2006, p. 28; Schmidt-Lellek, 2017, p. 79).

Against the background of this model, however, it can be stated with Schreyögg (2010, p. 131) that "demanding forms of coaching cannot be exhausted in pure process consulting," because "depending on the contract, depending on the issue, depending on the client and depending on the client's situation, process consulting (must) be enriched by sequences of expert consulting—and in some cases even by the doctor-patient model" (ibid., p. 130). Accordingly, she pleads for "a high degree of role diversity and role variability" of the coach, "which he should adapt to the consulting process according to the client's issues and options as well as his own potential" (Schreyögg, 2017, p. 180). In addition to the process-oriented "midwifery role," in which coaches are initially abstinent with regard to their professional

expertise, they also need a variety of structuring patterns in order "to examine an issue from multiple perspectives and using multiple paradigms" (ibid., p. 183); then they should also contribute their professional expertise in the further course of the coaching process so that the client's accustomed patterns of interpretation and action can be expanded and changed (ibid.).

Shaping and Structuring Professional Knowledge

According to the criteria mentioned at the beginning, scientific orientation is one of the constitutive professional characteristics. However, scientific knowledge, as acquired in academic courses of study and renewed or expanded in further training, is only one of several sources of knowledge because "professionalization of an occupation is not identical to its academization" (Buer, 2017, p. 161). Buer, therefore, speaks of three equal types of knowledge, which are acquired in different ways and secured in different *professional* and *scientific communities.* They are independent, have a different logic and must be brought into a systematic exchange with each other. Buer distinguishes between (1) *orientation knowledge*, which is gained, for example, through philosophical reflection and leads to certain attitudes; (2) *explanatory knowledge*, which is gained through research and offers interpretations (theories, mental models, patterns of interpretation, etc.) in order to be able to understand and explain connections; (3) *dispositive knowledge*, which is gained through the reflected experience of professionals and includes praxeological models of action; it shows itself in practical skills appropriate to the situation. Professionalism includes the competence to combine these three sources of knowledge (ibid., p. 152).

Schreyögg's "integrative action model" (Schreyögg, 2012, p. 160 ff.) also serves to link the different levels of knowledge with each other. The author defines the following aspects for the knowledge structure of a coaching concept:

1. A *meta-model* contains the anthropological and epistemological premises.
2. The *theory level* should provide a broad theoretical toolkit suitable for coaching; it should be compatible with the image of man formulated in the meta-model.
3. The *method-theoretical level* comprises explicit instructions on the use of methods, i.e., on goals, forms of reconstruction, intended effects, the interaction style, and the handling of different coaching situations.
4. Finally, the level of *practice* should have a *broad inventory of methods* so that as many coaching applications as possible can be methodically covered.

According to this model, too, professional action means being able to connect these levels; according to this model, it would not be professional to limit oneself, for example, to the application of learned methods and techniques ("tools") without reflecting on their anthropological or ethical implications.

Concrete Aspects of Professional Action in Coaching

What is the professionalism of coaching? Which concepts, attitudes and behaviors can be used to distinguish professionalism from charlatanism, for example? In the following, only a few aspects are explained.

1. *Multi-Perspectivity*: A specific feature of coaching as a profession lies in its interdisciplinarity (IOBC, 2019, p. 11). Since the client's issues and conflicts lie at the intersection of personal, professional, and organizational or institutional issues: The "person" dimension focuses on biographical developments, individual aspirations, potential, and limitations; the "occupation" dimension deals with the client's expertise and skills and professional identity; and the "organization" dimension concerns the context in which these developments take place and by which the respective role is defined [cf. the concept of "Triadic Career Guidance" by Rappe-Giesecke (2008)]. The aim of the consultancy is to find an appropriate balance between these areas and to establish it again and again.

2. *Scientific Orientation*: Orientation towards scientific concepts and findings opens the possibility for professionals not to be dominated by the pressure of a given conflict situation and to develop other perspectives for understanding and coping with it. This also includes patterns of interpretation that allow the "phenomena behind the phenomena" to be perceived and interpreted. The distancing reference to the generality of science and the reception of sociological, psychological, philosophical, or economic theories enable a relativization of the individual, concrete problem and can open previously unknown options for understanding and action for the client.

   Ideally, the scientific reference in professional practice takes place in three steps: (1) Diagnosis, (2) Conclusion, and (3) Indication (Abbott, 1988): The mental operation of the conclusion in a specific case is considered the actual professional achievement. However, this conclusion is never a simple deduction from abstract scientific knowledge. The so-called "application" of scientifically based expertise requires an original "translation service" of the professional to the complexity of the concrete individual case. Since science can only explain partial aspects and cannot take into account the variable diversity of contextual conditions, concrete applications have not been scientifically tested and are certainly not substantiated (Scholl, 2014). Many years of practical experience and the individual skill of the professional are important components for the success of the treatment of the problem. In spite of the academic nature of the professions, in the concrete case of professional practice, there is always a margin of discretion in the professional's approach (Oevermann, 1996).

3. *Dialogical competence* involves more than just mastering successful discussion techniques, but above all means an *attitude* of how to meet the respective counterpart and enter a relationship. This attitude can be outlined with the following aspects: (1) The recognition of the otherness of the other: He is not who I am or what I think he should be. (2) The willingness to let yourself be questioned by your counterpart and thus to open yourself up to something new.

(3) The openness for new possibilities in thinking and acting through a common interpretation: "consensus" is then not only the finding of common ground on the "lowest common denominator," but beyond that something newly created. (4) However, this also includes adequate communicative tools, e.g., the perception of the different levels of communication according to the communication model of Schulz von Thun (1981) as well as the ability to translate into foreign "languages," i.e., into foreign worlds of experience and imagination. In general, the polarity of symmetric and asymmetric relationships must be considered, which results from the definition of the roles of professional and client.

4. *Methodically Guided Self-Reflection*: A prerequisite for responsible commitment to the problems of others is self-reflection, which can be initiated through scientific education and practice-oriented training and further education. The challenge of stepping out of the familiar and thus also distancing oneself from oneself (or the familiar image of oneself) is the beginning of self-reflexivity and education. But since scientific knowledge can also become comfortable everyday habits, such a break will always be necessary—even if it means uncertainty and causes fear (Devereux, 1967). Therefore, professionalism is to be understood as a lifelong educational process that cannot be completed. The more clearly a coach opens to such lifelong educational processes, the more open he will be able to behave towards clients in the professional relationship. Because each individual case has its own complexity and needs to be understood in its own particularity.

5. *Rationality and Intuition*: Professional competence is based on acquired knowledge, learned techniques, and reflected practical experience. What we call "intuition" is fed by these sources, which can be called up spontaneously in concrete, practical situations as incorporated knowledge. In the consulting process, it is hardly possible to have the basic concepts ready for every question or statement. Therefore, scientifically analytical and intuitive approaches to concrete, practical situations are not contradictory as long as the latter remain rationally verifiable; otherwise, we would be dealing with charlatanism.

6. *Tolerance of Ambiguity*: This concerns the competence to deal with contradictions, irrevocable antinomies, and paradoxes. "The logic of professional action or professional work necessarily contains paradoxes" (van Kessel, 2015); i.e., a coach must not, for example, submit unilaterally either to the organizational logic of a company or to the logic of the individuals in the organization. For example, an evaluation in "black and white categories" would not be able to capture the contradictions in the respective phenomena themselves. This can be accompanied by a one-sided, e.g., tool-based solution orientation in coaching, which may not be able to cope with the complexity of a conflict situation (Eidenschink, 2015). "A one-sided dissolution of the paradox by ignoring or avoiding, etc. is to be regarded as a tendency to error" (van Kessel, 2015). The professionalism of the coach includes the competence to recognize such contradictions, to keep them out and to deal with them in the coaching process.

7. *Professional ethics* of coaches initially lies in correct behavior towards the respective partners (the commissioning companies and the coaching clients), as described in a professional code of ethics for coaches as an essential professional

characteristic (see e.g., IOBC, 2019, pp. 55–62). In addition, coaching also requires a special competence to recognize and reflect on ethical conflicts as such in work with clients and to show the relevant perspectives. Coaching is not a place for moral instruction, but coaches must be able to ask questions of ethics and use guidance to answer them (see chapter "Ethics and ethical competence in coaching").

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Pseudoscience and Charlatanry in Coaching

Siegfried Greif

Introduction

Everyone is allowed to use the term "coach." The sector operates without control or regulation. Everybody is permitted to offer coach training without governmental review and quality control. These conditions offer an environment where pseudo-scientific coaching concepts can easily take hold, as they have done in other professions during their early stages of development. At first glance, these individuals appear to be scientifically well-founded. But on closer examination, their claims lack the rigor of scientific evaluation. But how can one recognize an approach or individual as pseudoscientific or a charlatanry?

Scenario

When selecting suitable coaches for Emma, the Head of Human Resource Management of a company wants to be sure that they are qualified and that their methods are practically effective but also scientifically based. In the case of some applicants, Emma suspects that their application documents are merely pretending to have a scientific foundation. Several of them indicate that they have completed a coach training certified by the NLP Association. She asks how she can identify whether the applicants are merely pretending to have a scientific foundation. A colleague from another company advised her to be careful with the scientific bases of NLP. Emma asked: "What is the problem with NLP"? After all, these applicants are very

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explicitly referring to scientific theories and claim to achieve amazing transformational outcomes.

Characteristics of Pseudoscience

Hansson (2013, p. 61) describes why it is so difficult for scientists to distinguish between science and pseudoscience. It is "like riding a bicycle and the difficulty to explain how we are able to keep the balance." The key issue of pseudoscience in his view is that pseudoscience violates the quality criteria of science. Hansson (2013, p. 70 f.) defines three criteria, that must be violated for a statement or theory to be considered pseudoscientific:

1. "It pertains to an issue within the domains of science, in the broad sense (the criterion of scientific domain)."
2. "It suffers from such a severe lack of reliability that it cannot at all be trusted (the criterion of unreliability)."
3. "It is part of a doctrine whose major proponents try to create the impression that the impression that it represents the most reliable knowledge on its subject matter (the criterion of deviant doctrine)."

Hansson's criteria are a useful starting point for our own review. However, looking more closely at the criteria it seems to be hardly possible for people without basic methodological scientific knowledge and expertise about scientific domains to judge whether statements of theorists or practitioners pertain to a scientific domain. It is a complex question to identify the "ontology" of an approach (fundamental philosophical position on the nature of existence[1] or if and how it is possible to study reality or what exists). The third criterium looks simple, but which knowledge is unreliable? It is thus more difficult in practice to apply these criteria in an organizational setting without prior advanced knowledge. We, therefore, are looking for criteria which, at least to a large extent, can also be assessed by scientifically less well-versed persons.

An alternative approach is offered by Macho (2016). He analyzes examples of pseudoscience in medicine and psychology. He reduces the criteria to two main characteristics required to identify a pseudoscience (Macho, 2016, p. 186 f., free translation):

1. "Pseudoscience rejects accepted methods and standards of testing. Attempts are made to question the value of these methods or to classify worse methods as equally good."
2. "Pseudoscientific theories are characterized by an ontology that contradicts that of the common sciences. This includes:— dubious entities (such as life energy or

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[1]Collins Dictionary https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/ontology (last retrieved 7.9.20).

energetic fields and regions of the body) and mysterious functioning mechanisms (such as the transmission of the effect of substances by water once it has come into contact with these substances— even if the substance is no longer detectable)."

According to Macho (2016, p. 192, free translation), refusal to use recognized test procedures or the presentation of inadequate test methods as equivalent to recognized procedures results in "throwing dust in the eyes of the public." By selling ineffective therapies, consumers can be harmed and advances in medicine and psychology are endangered at large.

It is astonishing how claims about fantastic effects are accepted without criticism. Some protagonists are even worshipped by followers like gurus. As a word-play, these concepts, therefore, are called "eminence based" as opposed to "evidence based."

Macho's criteria address important negative consequences of using pseudoscientific intervention methods. However, in the scenario above, Emma, the Head of Human Resource Management would need advice from scientists to ascertain whether the test methods are approved and what questionable ontology is underlying. Against the background of the characteristics of Hansson and Macho, I have formulated criteria that can be widely verified even by laypersons. According to these criteria, concepts and theories as well as methods of intervention would be considered pseudoscientific if they meet the following criteria:

1. Intervention methods are recommended which are claimed to have extraordinary effects, but the claims of effects are solely anecdotally supported by a reference to single cases or to "experiences" (without precise descriptions).
2. Confirmations of the assumptions and effects of the intervention methods by scientific evaluation methods are missing and negative research results are withheld.
3. Scientific evaluation methods are generally rejected or alternative non-specified and not well-justified methods are demanded.
4. Scientific citations are imprecise or distorting.

The first characteristic checks whether "exceptional effects" are merely claimed on the basis of anecdotal descriptions of individual examples, but are not verified by any observations, which are precise and unambiguously traceable since they are well documented. Undauntedly, case studies are described imprecisely with incredibly great results. This may overwhelm listeners who wish they could achieve such extraordinary results. Our head of Resource Management, Emma, in the scenario above should not be impressed, but rather such extraordinary claims of transformational change should encourage suspicion.

The second characteristic of a pseudoscientific concept is the lack of scientific confirmation of the assumptions and the effectiveness of the methods. This is, in my view, the most important characteristic of pseudoscience. Only if the theory is new then it is excusable that methodologically careful evaluation research does not yet exist. Innovative methods often start with unsystematic observations of individual

cases. This is OK. However, the authors should freely admit that confirmatory research still is missing. From the outset, they should begin to carefully formulate their assumptions about relationships and outcomes and look for suitable scientific instruments of analysis with which they can be assessed in evaluation studies.—It is a severe problem, if in addition negative research results are withheld. This can even be considered fraudulent. Not only pseudoscientific methods, especially charlatans can be recognized by the fact that they unashamedly promise fantastic effects, but do not deliver and fraudulently conceal negative effects. Obviously, they must therefore fear, and are often critical of, independent scientific evaluation.

In addition, as mentioned in the third characteristic, the easiest way for charlatans is to fundamentally reject all approved practical and scientific methods, which are used for a critical testing for the effectiveness of the recommended interventions or to demand applying alternative, but non-specified methods without precise and clearly comprehensible justification. Emma, the Head of Human Resource Management, in our scenario above simply explore in more detail with the coach, which scientific evaluation methods were used and why they were preferred to established methods.

The fourth characteristic describes how pseudosciences give themselves a scientific look. They cite well-known scientists as a basis or "proof" for the validity of their theory or the effectiveness of their methods. Those who are not familiar with the research of the scientists cited can easily be blinded and impressed. In order to identify inaccurate or distorting scientific citations, expert knowledge and searches in the cited literature are required. Often a short internet search (e.g., in Google Scholar) can help. On closer inspection, however, one can often find examples, where quotations are surface and meaningless or even based on rather brazen distortions of the original quotations.

Neuro-Linguistic Programming as Pseudoscience

Neuro-linguistic Programming (NLP) is an approach which, with its theory, principles, and intervention methods, is widely used in coach training and among coaches. In a large Europe-wide survey ($N = 8110$) (Passmore et al., 2017), NLP is mentioned as their basis by 10.97% of the coaches in third place, after the GROW concept (23%) and the Solution Focused approach (16%) and a little bit more often than cognitive-behavioral coaching (10.79%). Bandler and Grinder (1975, 1979) originally conceived their approach and methods as an integrative brief psychotherapy. With the name of their approach, they refer to processes in the brain ("neuro"), language and communication ("linguistic") as well as to "programming" of the clients (changing perceptual and motor "programs" to achieve desired outcomes).

Bandler and Grinder mention basic theories of constructivist systems theory, linguistics, learning psychology, cybernetic psychology, and psychotherapy. They borrow and modify concepts and assumptions. They try to analyze the language structures and procedures of successful therapists such as the Gestalt therapist Fritz

Perls and the family therapist Virginia Satir, and later they also in their way have analyzed the hypnotherapeutic method of Milton Erikson. On this basis, they conceptualize a so-called "meta-model," with which they describe the surface and deep structure of human communication. Rijk et al. (2019) have summarized and discussed a Delphi Poll with NLP experts, trying to identify the tools, techniques and theoretical framework which they consider to belong to NLP. The results show that there is especially high consensus that the foundation principles and techniques introduced by Bandler and Grinder are still widely used as the basis of NLP.

At first glance, the vision and program are very impressive. However, scientists regard NLP as pseudoscience (Greif, 2018; Kanning, 2014; Passmore & Rowson, 2019). Also, WIKIPEDIA is mentioning that NLP s is called a pseudoscience by scientists[2] and "uses jargon words to impress readers and obfuscate ideas, whereas NLP itself does not relate any phenomena to neural structures and has nothing in common with linguistics or programming."

The following analysis begins with a brief introduction to basic assumptions and methods with a transcript of a coaching sequence to give an impression of how NLP coaches work. Afterward, the four criteria mentioned above are used to check whether NLP can be classified as a pseudoscience.

Modelling

Modelling is seen as the key to NLP (Linder-Pelz, 2010, p. 18 ff.). In the words of Bandler and Grinder (1979, p. 10):

> We call ourselves modelers. What we essentially do is to pay very little attention to what people say they do and a great deal of attention to what they do. And then we build ourselves a model of what they do.

Linder-Pelz (2010, pp. 18 ff. and 123 ff.) describes "modelling"[3] as a methodology, asking questions trying to "make explicit the specific thinking and language patterns, beliefs, assumptions, perceptual filters and mental movies that create the experience, emotion and/or behavior and being able to specify steps for replicating that experience." She prefers open exploratory questions with repetitions of the words of the client in order to avoid the coach introducing their own metaphors (so called "Clean Language"). The following excerpt is cited from an exploration sequence (Linder-Pelz, 2010, p. 123 ff.) between a coach and a manager, who wants to understand the low success of his organization (italics show the words of the clients and their repetition by the coach), using open questions with "what," "when," and "is there anything else about that":

> Coach: And what would you like to have happen?

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[2] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neuro-linguistic_programming (last retrieved 22.7.2020).

[3] In general, in NLP "modelling" is written with double "l" today.

>   Manager: I want to understand why our organization is not more successful.
>   Coach: And when you *want to understand why our organization is not more successful*, your organization is like what?
>   Manager: You could say, it's like a machine.
>   Coach: And what kind of *machine?*
>   *Manager:* [Pause] *It's like a combine harvester, I suppose.*
>   Coach: And is there anything else about that *combine harvester* that your organization is like?
>   (...)

Linder-Pelz (2010, 123 ff.) argues that the coach attends to the verbal, non-verbal, and also special and kinesthetic expressions. Thereby, it is possible to observe and model the individual metaphors and "way of being in the world." At first glance, the technical terms used and the psychological consequences implied appear interesting. However, it remains an open question why modelling is effective and if different "modellers" create the same reliable and valid models of the individual client.

Eye Movement Observation

A method outlined in detail with many examples in the famous book "Frogs into Princes" of Bandler and Grinder (1979) is the observation of eye movements. Bandler and Grinder assume that they reveal which representational system is preferred by the individual client. The main difference is between remembering something or constructing something in the imagination. For right-handed people, the eyes go to their left for their memories and to their right for constructed ideas. In the case of visual images, the eyes point upwards and in the case of auditory information they remain lateral. Visual and verbal or acoustic recalls go to their left, visual or verbal imaginations to the right. In kinesthetic memories, eye movements are directed to the lower left, and in "auditory digital" memories they look down to the lower right. (For left-handed people, everything is mirrored.) Ahmad (2013): has tested the assumptions using separate questions to his research subjects to evoke the expected different reactions. They are cited fully (cf. p. 70), since they illustrate the differences (see below for results of the study):

1. "Do you remember clearly the house you grew up in?" (This question activates visual recall and the eye should go toward the top left.)
2. "Can you imagine what the house would look like if it was bright pink or had more levels?" (This question activates visual imagination or construct and the eye should go toward the top right left.
3. "Do you have a favorite song/music? Can you play that in your head?" (This question activates acoustic recall and the eye should go toward the lateral right.)
4. "Can you imagine what the song would sound like if it was played at twice the speed (or if the singer had a voice like Donald Duck)?" (This question activates acoustic construct and the eye should go toward the lateral left.)

5. "Can you remember how it feels like to walk on soft sand/carpet?" (This question involves kinesthetic sensations and the eye should go bottom left.
6. "Can you say the times table?" (This question involves auditory digital information and the eye should go to the bottom right.)

Bandler and Grinder (1979) describe many examples of how to observe and to interpret such differences in eye movements. For them, it is a special diagnostic instrument that reveals hidden reactions and identifies which representational system is preferred by the client. In their view, this is important and can be used by the coach to match their client. Since the assumptions are very concrete, they have stimulated many research studies to verify them (see below).

Application of the Pseudoscience Criteria to NLP

In the following, the four criteria defined above are applied in order to examine if NLP can be regarded as being a pseudoscientific approach.

Claims of Extraordinary Effects Solely Supported Anecdotally

Already in the preface of the classical introduction to NLP training (Bandler & Grinder, 1979, p. 5 ff.) the author John O. Stevens asserts that through NLP principles "deep and lasting changes" are brought about "quickly and easily" and lists the following examples:

1. "Cure phobias and other unpleasant feeling responses in less than an hour,
2. help children and adults with 'learning disabilities' (spelling and reading problems, etc.) overcome these limitations, often in less than an hour,
3. eliminate most unwanted habits—smoking, drinking, over-eating, insomnia, etc.—in a few sessions,
4. make changes in the interactions of couples, families and organizations so that they function in ways that are more satisfying and productive,
5. cure many physical problems—not only most of those recognized as "psychosomatic" but also some that are not—in a few sessions."

Stevens himself mentions that "these are strong claims, and experienced NLP practitioners can back them up with solid, visible results." However, such quick and large effects have not been proven in scientific studies for NLP, nor any of the brief therapeutic methods known to date. Actually, all readers should have reacted skeptically to such fantastic claims of effectiveness, which have been often called "magical" by the followers, which still seem to believe that they are possible by using NLP. Such changes are now commonly called the "Bandler effect." These programs are still available online, "NLP life training" sells a training program

performed by Bandler for all, who say: "Yes I want to watch Richard Bandler perform life the techniques for creating miraculous change."[4]

In summary, the citations show that from the very beginning, NLP has been based on exaggerated and implausible claims of miraculous effectiveness, supported only by reference to undefined "experiences" or anecdotal case histories and demonstrations in seminars. Emma and others like her should be skeptical about fantastic transformational claims which suggest behavior change is almost instant or easy.

Missing Confirmations of the Assumptions and Effects by Scientific Evaluation

The confirmation of the assumptions and the efficacy of the recommended intervention methods which claim to be scientific by (qualitative and quantitative) scientific evaluation studies is a core criterium.

Preferred Representation Systems

The above assumptions about the meaning of eye movements have stimulated many studies because they can be tested easily by scientific research. Witkowski (2010) summarizes the results of research on representation systems. In an overview of 50 years of NLP research, he found 63 studies in the NLP research database, which have been published in recognized journals. Of these, only 18.2% yield partially supporting results. However, not one of them gives clear evidence of support. 54.5%, on the other hand, do not provide confirmation of the assumptions. Furthermore, in his review, he states that critical investigations were withheld and not acknowledged by NLP protagonists. However, Linder-Pelz (2010. p. 94), an NLP expert, is a positive exception and lists eye movement observation in her list of unconfirmed aspects of NLP.

According to the impression of Witkowski, these summaries are embellished. His overall judgment is harsh and follows the assessment of other reviewers and he concludes that "NLP represents pseudoscientific rubbish" Witkowsky (2010, p. 64).

The study of Ahmad (2013), which has been described above, is newer and carried out methodically very carefully. He had asked his 33 students (all right-handed) the six different questions listed above in order to activate the different representation systems. They are comparable to the questions used by Bandler and Grinder (1979). In five questions, the eye movements recorded by the eye movement camera went in the wrong direction in 57.6–81.8% of the cases. Only in the question on stimulating a memory from memory, while the eyes in 36.4% did not move in the expected direction, but mostly with 63.6%. Ahmad (2013, p. 72) concludes: "This does not give enough confidence to the followers of NLP regarding the proposition

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[4]https://www.nlplifetraining.com/bandler-effect-pack (last retrieved 30.7.2020).

that global eye patterns exist." In other words, it is wrong to claim, that eye movements result in reliably predictable reactions.

Effectiveness of NLP Methods

Sturt et al. (2012) reviewed a total of 1459 publications on the effectiveness of therapies with NLP methods. They found only ten with before and after measurements, five of them with randomized control groups. The therapies were each based on 4–20 sessions. The treatments included anxiety, obesity, morning fatigue, drug abuse, or claustrophobia when scanned with Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI). Only three of the before-and-after comparisons showed significant improvements in questionnaire scales, but none in objective measures (body weight, drug abuse measured by urine analysis, etc.). Only one of the five randomized control group studies showed significant effects. The authors conclude that NLP cannot be recommended for practical application.

A more recent meta-analysis of the effectiveness of NLP for the treatment of social and psychological problems is from Zaharia et al. (2015). Out of a total of 425 studies, 12 were found with comparisons of before and after measures (658 persons in total, studies with samples between 12 and 115; 6 of them with randomized control groups; with overlaps to the previous review). Again, the problems treated are very different (including snake phobia, claustrophobia in the scanner, depression, various anxieties, exhaustion, post-traumatic stress disorder, or birch pollen allergy; always several sessions). The mean effect calculated by the authors with Cohen's d-measure over all samples at first view seems to be strong, since it shows a significant value with a standard mean difference of the effect strength of $d = 0.54$. The authors conclude that NLP has effects that can be compared to those of other psychotherapies. However, a closer look reveals that the high mean value is due to an extremely high individual value of 2.20 after treatment of fear of dental procedures (using state anxiety questionnaire measures). Such misleading extreme individual values must be eliminated as spike because of their distorting of the mean value. After extinction, the average effect is reduced to only moderate average strength. Most effects in the individual studies are between -0.18 and 0.35. Some are even negative. The others are at most moderately strong. If we look at the effects from the randomized samples (only five), we find only one single large effect with $d = 0.65$. Here two effects are negative, one at $d = 0.00$ and one at $d = 0.07$. These overall results of NLP treatments could hardly be more devastating.

In a recent review, Passmore and Rowson (2019) summarize the outcome of published studies within NLP Coaching. Among 19,154 citations they found only 40 peer-reviewed studies. Their conclusion is that "there is almost no evidence to support the multiplicity of claims made about its effectiveness as a 1-to-1 coaching interventions to facilitate behavioral change." Therefore "NLP coaching has very little to offer coaching practitioners, as a separate and distinct set of interventions" (p. 67).

In summary, confirmations of assumptions and intervention effects by scientific evaluation are missing, proving the fantastic effects they claim. This is remarkable, because NLP had originally started to increase the effectiveness following the models of the best therapists. Apparently, however, the resulting effects are rather lower and sometimes even negative. This is concealed by NLP representatives. Such withholding of negative research results is a severe violation of basic ethical scientific principles.

Rejection of Scientific Evaluation Methods or Demanding Alternate Methods

From the beginning in their introduction, NLP Bandler and Grinder (1979, p. 10) openly confessed that they are not interested in the "real" or "true" nature of things:

> We are not psychologists, and we're also not theologians or theoreticians. We have no idea about the 'real' nature of things, and we're not particularly interested in what's 'true'. The function of modeling is to arrive at descriptions which are useful. So, if we happen to mention something that you know from a scientific study, or from statistics, is inaccurate, realize that a different level of experience is being offered you here. We're not offering you something that's true, just things that are useful.

Every reader of this and similar positions of other NLP authors normally should be alarmed, since Bandler and Grinder openly confess that:

1. They have no idea about the "real nature of things" (why do not they try to find out?) and are.
2. not interested in what's true or false (do they accept false assumptions?)
3. but only offer "things that are useful" (whatever that means and useful for whom?).

It sounds like a cynical position that they add, that followers should not bother about scientific studies which contradict their positions. Basically, such provocative arguments bold-facedly confront sound judgment and should be classified as "anti-science." However, until today, NLP experts continue to claim that NLP is a science. An example is the NLP Master Trainer and Leader in International NLP development. He propagates NLP as "The Art and Science of Excellence."[5]

Cheal (2012), in his attempt to justify alternative research methods for NLP, recently marked the differences between NLP and various common scientific approaches. In the beginning, he notes the above citation of Bandler and Grinder and outlines NLP as an approach, which "is less interested whether there is an objective reality or not, but more how we process our own reality (...) We deal with the individual's 'map of the world' and then we generalize to shared maps" (Cheal, 2012, p. 31). The NLP concept of a "map" refers to subjective representations of the

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[5] https://excellenceassured.com/10892/nlp-neuro-linguistic-programming-validated-by-neuroscience-nlp-updated-in-2019 (last retrieved 27.8.2020).

"outside world" or "territory," as it is called. NLP strongly presupposes that "the map is not the territory." "The problem of clients is never in the world, it is their representation of the world" (Grimley, 2008, p. 208). According to Cheal, NLP, therefore, has to use only subjective research methods, which in his opinion differ completely from methods of normal empiricism or realism in science. The philosophy of science to be applied as a basis for this is constructivism. "With constructivism, we cannot know any 'external world', we only ever analyze our internal constructions of the world (which are in turn based on our interpretations)" (Cheal, 2012, p. 34). As a consequence, he rejects any scientific approaches that try to observe and analyze processes and characteristics of the "external world" beyond subjective representations. Examples that he implicitly excludes would be empirical evaluations of organizational outcomes (e.g., key Performance Indicators) hypothetically resulting from coaching. Empiricism in his view only is only based on experiences and the senses and does not accept knowledge through indirect sources. Realism is interpreted by him as a philosophy of science, which takes the view that what these senses show us is the truth.

Chaels' description of approaches of modern Philosophy of Science neglect long-held views of Scientific Empiricism and Realism. Two best-known international standard introductions to various scientific approaches have been published by Chalmers (2013, first published in 1976) and Godfrey-Smith (2003). They describe different positions of modern Empiricism and Realism. None of them matches the descriptions of Chaels. Chalmers and Godfrey-Smith prefer a sophisticated version of Realism to Empiricism. Both discuss the question, how "truth" can be defined and that it is impossible for empirical studies to prove the truth of an assumption. It is only possible to show that the deduction of an assumption is true or false if it is entirely deduced from assumptions, which themselves are known to be true or false. Scientific theories themselves are viewed as social constructions or "tools for thought" (Greif, 1991). It is a classical critique of the Philosophy of Science, that all observations (by human senses or scientific measurement technologies) may be biased and one-sided. Godfrey-Smith (2003, p. 186 ff.) therefore explicitly states: "I have been cautious about truth. I (instead) used a broad concept of 'accurate representation' to describe a goal that science has for its theories." Therefore, scientists try to construct theories that with high accuracy represent observed relations found in empirical studies. The accuracy or fit of the theoretically assumed relations to those found in the study can be evaluated and often can even be measured by statistical criteria. It is a prejudice, that modern Realism is not open for all kinds of theoretical constructs, subjective data and observations, quantitative and qualitative, large samples, or case studies (Greif, 2011).

An example is a large recent study in the field of coaching ($n = 1217$ clients), which assessed subjective process and outcome scales (Kinder et al., 2020). The Structural Equation Model measures two reliable outcome factors of coaching. The first factor, "satisfaction with coaching" can be predicted statistically to a high percentage of 64% of the variations of the factor (especially by the efficacy expectation that the changes and actions developed in the process and by the perceived empathy of the coach). The predicted percentage of the variance of the second factor

"goal attainment and implementation" is lower with 44% and shows the statistically highest dependencies on subjective trust in the coach and again the efficacy expectation. The standard statistical criteria of the fit of the underlying theoretical model are good. However, following the principles of modern Realism (and many empirically-oriented researchers, without explicit philosophical position), competing models which in additional studies show better fit values and higher percentages of the predicted outcome factors, should be preferred by the scientific community and by professional coaches.

As this brief description of modern realism shows, Chaels has represented a distorted version of scientific Realism. He stylizes Realism in such a way that uninformed readers may be convinced, that it is an inadequate approach. His meta-scientific arguments could be classified as another attempt by NLP to reject widely accepted scientific approaches and to demand alternative scientific approaches and methods without reasoned arguments.

Imprecise or Distorted Scientific Citations

Pseudoscientific concepts create the impression of being scientific by referring to well-known current scientific authors and their basic assumptions and terms. On closer examination, however, they are cited inaccurately or distortedly. In the following short analysis of this proceeding of NLP protagonists, only a few of many examples are mentioned.

Chomsky's Transformational Grammar

The understanding of the *Transformational Grammar* of the Linguist Noam Chomsky is the "single most pervasive influence in NLP" (Grimley, 2008, p. 196 f.). Chomsky was very famous in the founding years of NLP and Grinder studied linguistics.

NLP uses Chomsky's term "deep structure," but refers to the unconsciously underlying rules and meanings (Grimley, 2008, p. 196 f.). This use distorts Chomsky's linguistic theory, which only examines grammatical rules for transforming the underlying structures into the actual spoken or "surface" sentences. Chomsky used the term "deep structure" merely in its "technical sense" referring to the rewriting rules of sentences with similar meanings and to develop a "Transformational Grammar" which describes these rules (Chomsky, 2017, p. 180 ff.). For example, in English the active and passive by and large has the same meaning as in the sentences: "John sees Mary" or "Mary is seen by John." Therefore, with Chomsky, they show different "surface structures" with the same "deep structure" (Chomsky, 2017, p. 132), which are described by the Transformational Grammar. NLP refers to these basic terms of Chomsky, but uses them in a completely different way, without mentioning and explaining these differences. It seems mysterious why Grinder, as a linguist, could so completely distort the theory of Chomsky.

Stollznow (2014, p. 234) concludes that NLP "has very little to do with linguistics. (...) Yet, NLP claims to be heavily influenced by seminal linguist Noam Chomsky. In particular, NLP is said to be inspired by Chomsky's theory of transformational grammar, and his concept of deep structure and surface structure in language (...). Other than borrowed terminology, NLP doesn't bear a resemblance to any of Chomsky's theories or philosophies."

Anchoring: The Master Tool

In NLP, anchoring' is viewed as a "master tool." Bandler and Grinder (1979) describe various scenes e.g. a consciously used physical touch of the shoulder of the client together with the request to imagine a successful coping with a difficult situation, assuming that this can activate a positive emotional state. This laying on of the hand is an example of "anchoring." There are many other methods for this. For example, you can also "anchor" yourself simply by imagining a positive experience and linking this to the simultaneous touch of your earlobe with your thumb and index finger. In the future, this is expected to activate positive coping in critical situations. Grimley (2016, p. 175) in his recent description of NLP cites Derks (2000), who is very convinced that it is not necessary to evaluate the effectiveness of "anchoring," since it is well confirmed by research on classical conditioning and completely identical to it: "For instance, instead of asking if the use of anchors is supported by scientific research, people wonder if 'NLP' is scientifically sound. But anchors are just another name for classical conditioning, something based on the Pavlovian paradigm" (Derks, 2000).

It may be possible in some cases that the described method, under conditions yet to be clarified, helps some people to remember intentions for action that are difficult to implement or to reinforce positive feelings of confidence. It is incomprehensible, however, why this method, which is so much propagated in NLP, is until today regarded as an application of classical conditioning according to Pavlov (cf. Grimley, 2016; Linder-Pelz, 2010). In his experiments, Pawlow conditioned the reflex of salivary secretion in dogs by the sound of a bell, which repeatedly sounded directly in advance of feeding. In experiments with humans, for example, it is possible to condition the eyelid blink reflex, if you accompany a short air blast to the eye, which stimulates the unconditional reflex to close the eye by a previous tone. By the way, such conditioning does not succeed in the same way in all people and requires a fixation of the head and 20–30 repetitions (Merrill et al., 1999). It is simply nonsensical to assume that positive coping with a difficult situation or "confidence" are "reflexes" which can be classically conditioned by means of a few repetitions of touches or even imaginations.

Further Examples of Jumbled Technical Terms and Distorted References

There are many examples of jumbled technical terms and distorted, incomprehensible references to scientific theories and therapy methods by NLP authors. For example, the elementary TOTE-unit of goal-oriented human action of Miller et al. (1960) is transformed into a general "strategy" for the solution of problems (see Grimley, 2008), which is certainly not what this basic unit of behavior stands for. Hypnotherapeutical induction of trance, as it is performed by Milton Erickson (Erickson et al., 1976) very attentively, sensitively, and gently, with previous explanations and reassurances at every step (see a YouTube video with Erickson[6] and his explanations in Erickson et al., 1976, pos. 1314 ff.). This is reduced in NLP to a fast handshake induction method, introduced by Bandler, as many YouTube videos demonstrate (also in a video of Bandler[7]). In the trance state, the therapist then uses suggestive sentences to influence the client and literally bombards him or her with suggestions on what to feel and do.

More recently research has sought to explore NLP assumptions by references to neuro-scientific findings. For example, Schmidt-Tanger (2006) a well-known NLP protagonist in Germany quotes a model of the neuroscientist Hüther (2004) about levels in the human brain. It describes how incoming signal patterns become inner images and what meaning emotions have in this process. However, there are hardly any appropriate similarities to the processes outlined in her contribution. Nevertheless, she already concludes in the title of her contribution: "And NLP is right after all" (free translation).

More examples of jumbled technical terms and distorted references can frequently be found throughout the NLP literature. Conversely, it seems to be more difficult to find examples where Bandler and Grinder, or their followers, correctly quote technical terms and theories.

It is tragic that since the 1970s, NLP has quoted well-known scientists in such an associative, inaccurate, or distorting way, giving itself the appearance of a scientific approach. In itself, it does not take much expertise to recognize the differences between the original theories and their modification by NLP authors.

Summary of the Evaluation of Pseudoscience Criteria for NLP

NLP started in the 1970s as a promising new approach, which integrated new theories of the time and therapeutic methods of leading therapists. However, it is noteworthy that the effectiveness of NLP methods seems to be lower than that of the originals and that basic assumptions are not supported by research evidence.

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[6]Video of Erickson demonstrating his Handshake Trance Induction method: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HywhydYzMdc (last retrieved 3.9.2020)

[7]Bandler demonstrating his version of the trance induction: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0-CLvUWiJc0 (last retrieved 3.9.2020)

Research programs, or theories that have a smaller empirical support than their forerunners, are called "degenerative" by the well-known science philosopher (Lakatos, 1981). Compared to the high initial expectations, NLP must obviously be viewed as a "*degenerated intervention approach*" when compared to these earlier theories and methods.

In summarizing our evaluation against the criteria developed in this contribution, NLP should be classified as a "pseudoscience." There is clear evidence that all four criteria apply to NLP from the founding years until today:

1. The claims of intervention methods with extraordinary effects are solely anecdotally supported by single cases or "experiences."
2. Scientific confirmations of the assumptions and effects are missing and negative research results are withheld.
3. Scientific evaluation methods are rejected.
4. Scientific citations are imprecise or distorting.

There are, however, NLP proponents such as Linder-Pelz (2010) who strive for a scientific foundation and evaluation of the effectiveness of NLP. She herself criticizes the rejection of scientific research by the NLP community. From a future perspective, she demands an evidence-based, scientific NLP approach in the field of coaching. However, the standard formula that "more research is needed" would not suffice. The basic concepts, assumptions and intervention methods, and NLP training would have to be fundamentally reinvented.

Pseudoscience and Charlatanry

According to dictionaries like Collins, a *charlatan* is "a person who pretends to have expert knowledge or skill that he or she does not have."[8] In the Middle Ages, and into the nineteenth century, "quacks" and snake oil salesmen advertised herb mixtures at markets as wonder drugs, containing magical powers (George & Passmore, 2019). It was charlatanry if they knew exactly that these drugs had no healing power and if they moved on before it could be revealed. More generally defined, charlatans are "persons who make wonderful promises (cures, therapies, personal successes or profits etc.) and know that they usually cannot keep them." They must therefore fear any evaluation of their promises and detection of their deception, especially scientific evaluation.

Quacks may be swindlers, but some may have believed in the "miracle cures." They may be gullible devotees, but should not be called charlatans (cf. Hausse, 2018). This depends on whether they know and intentionally conceal that their

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[8]Definition of "charlatan": https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/charlatan (last retrieved 4.9.20).

treatment is either ineffective or even harmful. Such salespeople, inventors, or practitioners should openly admit that evaluation has yet to be completed.

A comparison can be made between pseudoscience and charlatanry. If we use the above criteria for pseudoscience, they could equally be applied to charlatans. However, for the individual NLP practitioners to be considered a charlatan, it would also require that the protagonists must be aware of their deception, and deliberately conceals it. NLP protagonists are called upon to examine the criticism presented here very carefully. They should formulate very cautiously how they sell their methods and be cautious of what they promise their customers. Of course, this also applies to scientific theories and methods, based on research evidence.

Conclusion

Coaching is interesting for charlatans because it is popular and because it is not a legally protected profession. This makes it all the more important to determine whether the individual is making a false promise they could not deliver. Emma, in our case study should could consider the conclusion in the review of the evidence for NLP coaching offered by Passmore and Rowson (2019, p. 67): "We have no hesitation in coming to the view that coaching psychologists and those interested in evidenced based coaching would be wise to ignore the NLP brand in favour of models, approaches and techniques where a clear evidence base exists."

NLP is by no means the only concept that can be considered a pseudoscience. In the internet, you can quickly find old and new concepts with impressive titles. Caution is advised when great effects are promised, but only general references to experiences or individual cases, or individual customer references are made. Double caution is called for when no scientific research and reviews of the effectiveness of interventions are mentioned with precise bibliographical references, but rather when they refer only to well-known names—as witnesses, so to speak. It is also worth taking a close look at whether the terms and research of well-known scientists are accurately referred to or ask an expert to check this. We make it too easy for self-proclaimed professionals if we allow ourselves to be blinded.

In the scenario at the beginning of this contribution, Emma, the Head of Human Resource Management asked how among the coaches, who apply for coaching jobs in her company she could identify the coaches who are merely pretending to have a scientific foundation. The recommendation for her is simply: to use the four criteria mentioned above to interview the applicants.

Coaching federations that accredited coaching programs and internet platforms, which supply professional coaches, would be well advised to use the criteria offered in this chapter to protect their reputations and that of the newly emerging profession of coaching.

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Quality of the Coaching Service

Friedemann W. Nerdinger

In the practice of coaching, it is often denied that this activity is a service and instead a special professional status is claimed. For example, Landwehr (n.d.) says briefly and succinctly: "Coaching is relationship work and not a service" and the Coaching Report (n.d.) defines: "'Interactive' means that in coaching no service is performed for the client, but coach and client are equally challenged and work together on an equal 'peer level'" (more differentiated, but with the same tenor: Looss, 2014). This is a fundamental misunderstanding: service is not defined by the relationship between supplier and demand or by the cooperation of the customer in the creation of the service (on the contrary, this is even constitutive for all services), but by the economic exchange "service for money" (Nerdinger, 2011)—this exchange also forms the core of the professional activity "coaching", as will be explained in more detail.

It is striking that the concealment or even denial of the exchange character underlying this activity is often accompanied by the strict rejection of demands for evaluations of the performance of coaching or coaches. Checks on the quality of coaching are then rejected, among other things, on the grounds that this activity cannot be standardized and therefore the process cannot be evaluated (Looss, 2014). However, this would also mean that the customary quality measurements for coaching in the service sector would not be appropriate. From a scientific point of view, however, coaching is one of the personal-interactive services (Klaus, 1984; see Nerdinger, 2011), so the instruments for measuring the quality of such services are in principle transferable to this activity. A better consideration of interdisciplinary service research within the profession could help to free coaching from the currently prevailing gray areas of concealing the underlying economic exchange uncertainty

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about its effectiveness, the non-transparent criteria for recruiting coaches and evaluating their performance and to give it a more serious reputation.

Services

The three-sector model in economics distinguishes three sectors of activity.

The *primary sector*—also known as "primary production"—comprises agriculture, forestry, livestock, and fisheries. The *secondary sector* of industrial production, first of all, includes the metalworking industries as well as mining, the energy industry, and crafts. What remains is a residual category, the *tertiary sector*, which includes all other industries and is referred to as the service sector. In the statistics, the tertiary sector includes everything that does not clearly belong to the primary or secondary sector (cf. Federal Statistical Office, 2014), including trade, hotels and restaurants, transport and communications, financial intermediation, real estate, local authorities and social insurance, education, health, veterinary and social work, and other public and personal services.

Given this extreme diversity of activities that make up the tertiary sector, the question arises about what is actually meant by services. According to the economic classification, services have the character of a residual category, which is due to several special features in which services differ from primary or industrial products. The most frequently cited central characteristics are the following (cf. Meffert et al., 2018):

1. *Intangibility* or *immateriality*: Services are materially intangible goods (whereby many services relate to material products, e.g., cars, on which the service "repair" is carried out—but this is not constitutive for the activity of the service). One of the consequences of this characteristic is that customers usually have great difficulty in assessing the quality of services.
2. *Uno-actu principle*: Production and consumption processes coincide in space and time (also known as "relative inseparability"). This results, among other things, in a restriction of the range of services offered—services cannot be stored or transported due to this principle and there are time (and physical) limits to their performance.
3. *Co-creation of the service*: The customer is more or less intensively involved in the creation of the service—often he only has to define his wishes more precisely, in coaching he produces the service together with the coach ("at peer level"). In some other services, however, he even seems to do the essential part of the work himself (the work of the service provider is then limited to "helping people to help themselves", as is often the case in psychotherapy, for example).

These characteristics are ultimately due to socio-psychological qualities of service production: from a psychological point of view, the interaction between provider and customer is at the heart of a service (see Nerdinger, 2011). The actual service is therefore build by the actions of the provider, whereby the creation of the

service always requires a certain degree of participation of the customer. This is the main reason for the difficulty of economic disciplines to develop a clear, generally accepted definition of services (Meffert et al., 2018).

Attempts are often made to structure the field by classifying the services or processes. From a psychological point of view, the role of interaction between the service provider and customer in the creation of the service is crucial. Due to the nature and intensity of the interaction between the service provider and customer, the tertiary sector can be divided into supportive-interactive, problem-oriented-interactive and personal-interactive services (Klaus, 1984; see Nerdinger, 2011):

1. In the case of *supportive-interactive* services, the object of the service is often a tangible asset contributed by the customer—examples are the services of repair workshops or car wash facilities, where the tangible asset "car" is brought in for processing. The process of service provision is essentially carried out by editing the object, the interaction between employee and customer merely supports this process (e.g., by the customer placing the order and expressing his wishes for editing).
2. In the production of *problem-oriented-interactive* services, the information necessary for the production of services is conveyed either indirectly via various channels or in direct contact with the customer. Examples are the services of law firms or advertising agencies. In these cases, the customer controls the production of the service to a great extent through his ideas and wishes, so the quality of the interaction also has a great influence on the result.
3. In the case of *personal-interactive* services, the person of the customer is the object of the service provision. In this case, the service consists in the impact on the cognitive, emotional, and/or physical area of the customer, the produced service is largely exhausted in the interaction with the service provider. Examples are the services of hairdressers, physiotherapists, further education, psychotherapists, and also: coaches.

Coaching as a Form of Service

According to Rauen (2005, p. 9 ff.), coaching is an interactive, person-centered consulting and support process. The goal of this process—at least for coaching executives—is to increase and maintain the performance of the client. Accordingly, coaching is a consulting process tailored to the individual needs of the client, which supports the improvement of his professional situation and the shaping of his professional role. By optimizing human potential, the success of the company/organization should ultimately be fostered. According to the model of Klaus (1984), coaching understood in this way is one of the personal-interactive services.

Based on the thesis, which is more frequently expressed by active coaches, that coaching is not a service, but some kind of special form of professional activity, which is usually described in a rather cloudy way (cf., e.g., Looss, 2014), Greif (2015) has analyzed the specifics of this activity in more detail. In addition to the

common defining characteristics of services, which are also constitutive for coaching—it is characterized by a high degree of intangibility, the Uno-actu principle and a high degree of co-creation of the service—he names three further characteristics specific to coaching: heterogeneity, strict confidentiality and relative independence of the client/cost unit and service user.

Since coaching is oriented toward the particular characteristics of the clients, their topics, goals, and contexts (Greif, 2013), the procedure takes on very different forms, i.e., coaching is to be classified as an extremely *heterogeneous service.* A major consequence of this feature is that coaching, unlike other less complex services, is difficult to standardize. Although coaches do have a number of basic "tools" for dealing with relevant problems, these must be flexibly adapted to the respective clients.

Specific to coaching are also the *strict confidentiality* to which coaches commit themselves toward their clients (without being subject to the professional secrecy as doctors or psychologists) and the way in which they are *billed*: Apart from the rather few self-payers, coaching is usually commissioned and financed by companies. This is similar to in-company training, although in this case the subjects and objectives of the service are mainly determined by the client. Accordingly, in the case of services in further education or training, an evaluation of the results is usually required. In coaching, on the other hand, it is ultimately the respective clients (who are rarely the contracting body paying for the service) who decide how the results are to be evaluated. Although the latter in the companies certainly have ideas about what coaching their managers should achieve (after all, an order is placed based on this expectation), whether or how these ideas are taken into account in the coaching process can only be checked to a limited extent due to the confidentiality and the difficulty of recording such services. For this reason, clients prefer to focus on the "results" in the sense of whether the person being coached is better able to cope with their tasks after a coaching phase. When (further) contracts are awarded, it is also asked whether the results met expectations.

In this sense, coaching is therefore a very specific service, but nevertheless, a service that essentially consists of a coach trying to help the client in their development in exchange for money (cf. Nerdinger, 2011). The standard argument against this classification, that coaching is relationship work, which two partners perform "at peer level" (Looss, 2014), cannot change this: As long as coaches can be paid for this kind of relationship work, they perform a professional activity which is a service for the client. The fierce resistance to this classification by many professional coaches, while at the same time obscuring the fact that they offer a service against payment, rather suggests that in some cases there is a reluctance in principle to transparently check the quality of the service. Precisely because of the transaction "performance for money," which is also the basis of coaching, the quality of the performance and its recording is of particular importance, as in the entire service sector.

Service Quality

In the tertiary sector, the quality of service is particularly important for (commercial) success: The quality of service perceived by customers influences their satisfaction with the service and thus their intention to remain loyal to the service provider to a large extent (Bruhn, 2019). Quality is defined in the EN ISO 9000:2005 standard as "the degree to which a set of inherent characteristics meets requirements." Quality thus indicates the extent to which a product (a good or service) meets existing requirements. Due to the immateriality of the services and the involvement of the customers in the provision of the services, however, the recording of such a quality in the field of services is much more difficult than in the product area (Zeithaml, 1981; see Nerdinger, 2011). Products are characterized by *search qualities* (the customer can judge the characteristics of the product before buying it, e.g., driving a car for a test drive) or by *experience qualities* (after purchase or use, i.e., when the performance has been "experienced," its quality can be judged relatively well, e.g., the quality of the food in a restaurant). Personal-interactive services, on the other hand, are characterized by *credence qualities*: Since the customer lacks the expertise to assess the procedure and the service provider's performance, he is usually unable to evaluate it competently (which is something that doctors sometimes convey so forcefully to their patients). For this reason, quality is defined within the framework of service research from the customer's point of view, i.e., ultimately what customers perceive as quality *is* the quality of the service.

Service companies often try to measure the quality of service perceived by customers to identify starting points for improvement, among other things, with the aim of increasing customer loyalty. However, such a measurement must be based on a model of service quality, usually using the so-called *disconfirmation paradigm* (see Bruhn, 2019). According to this model, customers have expectations of a service based on previous experience with the service, its price, and other influencing factors such as the design of the place where the service is delivered (target values). The expectations are compared with the actual course of performance (actual values): If the perceptions exceed expectations, the service is considered to be of high quality. If they fall short of expectations, negative judgments will be made. If expectations and perceived service correspond, a rather neutral assessment of quality follows. The basic assumption is that these comparisons also consider the offers of competitors, their price and value.

Despite its widespread use, the disconfirmation paradigm contains several unsolved problems (Homburg & Stock, 2012). Since customer expectations are central to understanding personal-interactive services, the ambiguity of the underlying concept of expectations must be considered. On the one hand, performance assessment during and after an interaction depends on customer expectations, which is captured via the concept of (perceived) service quality or customer satisfaction as a consequence. On the other hand, expectations influence the decision even before the time of purchase, i.e., the customer will—if he has any choice—choose the supplier he expects to have his wishes fulfilled. Expectations are the demands that a customer

places on a product or service—in terms of the target value, they describe the level of performance that the customer demands (Dormann & Zapf, 2007). However, these target values can take very different forms (Georgi, 2001):

Desired level: A service that the customer wants and that the provider should deliver—in this case, the expectations correspond to the customer's wishes. The desired level depends on the experience of the customer and his requirements based on it.

Ideal level: The idea of an optimal, unsurpassable performance. This expectation marks the best possible performance and therefore depends not least on the imagination of the customer.

Typical level: The idea of the typical or average quality of a service. This expectation often relates to a specific class of services.

Minimum tolerable level: The notion of what constitutes acceptable performance (these vary depending on the market situation).

In addition, expectations are dynamic ideas that can change depending on the situation and over time (Bruhn et al., 2006). For example, in critical situations with limited offerings, customers are willing to switch from a desired or even ideal expectation level to the minimally tolerable one. However, what is still tolerable in the case of a service is subject to changes in time due to increasing competition and constantly rising customer demands. These conceptual problems must be considered when measuring service quality.

Measurement of Service Quality

The disconfirmation paradigm underlies the most important—in terms of the most frequently used—instrument for measuring service quality, the SERVQUAL questionnaire (an artificial word formed from the terms "service" and "quality"; cf. Parasuraman et al., 1988). The development of this questionnaire was based on group interviews with customers of different services who discussed their expectations of the respective service. The statements could be grouped into ten categories:

Tangibles: This includes the appearance of facilities and equipment, as well as the employees in contact with customers and the printed communication media.

Reliability: The ability to deliver the promised service reliably and accurately.

Responsiveness: The willingness to help customers and serve them promptly.

Competence: The mastery of the professional skills and expertise necessary to perform the service.

Courtesy: The politeness and friendliness of the employees with customer contact.

Credibility: The credibility and honesty of the service provider.

Security: The effort to avoid exposing customers to danger or risk.

Access: How easily customers find access to contact persons.

Communication: Listening to customers and informing them in understandable
    language.
Understanding/knowing customers: The amount of effort put into getting to know
    customers and their needs.

Based on these findings, the SERVQUAL questionnaire was developed, whereby
items of the type "so should it be" were formulated to record expectations of the type
"so-it-should-be". An ideal expectation is assumed in this measurement. With
reformulations of the type "so-is-it" the experienced performance is recorded. The
calculated discrepancy is used to draw conclusions about the quality of service.

The questionnaire comprises 22 items that form five scales: Competence, cour-
tesy, credibility, and security are directed at the person of the service provider and
form the scale "assurance." A further aspect of the person is captured by the scale
"empathy," which is made up of the dimensions access, communication, and
understanding/knowing customers. This illustrates the paramount importance
of the person of the service provider for the perception of quality. Expectations of
responsiveness, reliability, and tangibles, on the other hand, lead to scales of
their own.

The questionnaire was originally developed with the claim of being a universally
applicable instrument in the service sector, but due to the results of numerous
reviews this claim cannot be maintained (cf. Hentschel, 1999; Bruhn, 2019). Rather,
the characteristic features of each specific service must be collected once again and
the measurements have to be supplemented by other methods. Qualitative pro-
cedures are mainly used for this purpose, whereby the critical incident technique is
most frequently applied.

The critical incident technique goes back to the work analysis procedure of
Flanagan (1954) and was transferred to the service sector by Bitner et al. (1985).
To measure the quality of service, customers are usually simply asked to recall
events in their encounter with a service provider that made them particularly satisfied
or dissatisfied. If a methodological restriction is applied at all, it consists of the
"Flanagan criterion," according to which a new sample is drawn until the last
hundred event reports do not lead to more than three new event categories. The
events are recorded and then evaluated by category formation.

This procedure was used to examine, among other things, the quality of services
from the point of view of customers or service providers, the reasons for changing a
service provider, the costs of service quality for the customer, and the influence of
other customers on the experience of the service (Nerdinger, 2007). Since this
procedure can be used to determine concrete influencing variables that trigger
satisfaction (so-called satisfiers) or dissatisfaction (dissatisfiers), it has some practi-
cal significance.

Quality of Coaching and Its Measurement

Due to its specific characteristics, coaching is obviously a service that is difficult to evaluate. In such cases, the "purchase risk" is usually perceived as very high, which is why customers refer to signals of trustworthiness, e.g., to the awareness of the provider or even the established brand (Meffert et al., 2018). In the case of coaching, informal evaluation communications in the sense of personal recommendations seem to play a special role. Stephan and Gross (2011) interviewed 51 managers, who were responsible for coaching in their companies, about this problem and found out that clients often try to ensure quality by "precise clarification of the assignment and definition of goals at the beginning," a subsequently estimated degree of goal achievement (the most frequently mentioned measure) and feedback interviews (see Greif, 2015). Ultimately, therefore, even in the evaluation of coaching, expectations (in the form of clarification of tasks and definition of goals, among other things) are compared with the perceived results in accordance with the discounting paradigm, whereby the expectations (target values) are formulated rather vaguely for coaching and the results (actual values) are hardly ever systematically checked.

Obviously, this common type of rather indirect assessment of the quality of coaching measures by the client is as vague as it is non-transparent. It is therefore in the interest of those who offer the coaching service to make the assessment of this service transparent and verifiable in terms of content. This, in turn, requires a model that specifies the quality characteristics of coaching and thus brings them to an evaluation. Greif (2013) has developed a general evaluation model for coaching that distinguishes five categories:

1. Prerequisites for coaching (this includes all inputs from coaches, clients and the organization that are provided prior to the start)

   Characteristics of the coach: professional competence and professional credibility; clarification of the client's expectations.
   Characteristics of the client: prior knowledge of coaching; expectations of the relationship; motivation for change; perseverance
   Organizational requirements: announcement of the coaching program; acceptance of the program; participation of high potentials

2. Coaching process (coaching relationship, behavior of the coach and client)

   Coaching relationship: mutual respect and trust; meeting at peer level; coach has no decision-making power over clients; confidentiality
   Behavior of the coach: appreciation and emotional support; result-oriented problem and self-reflection; clarification of objectives.
   Behavior of the client: optimism, openness, reflexivity, self-motivation

3. Short-term results (general and specific criteria for coaching, each for client, coach, and organization):

Client: general—satisfaction, reduction of negative emotions, higher self-esteem; coaching-specific—clarity and concreteness of objectives, perspective-taking capacity, improvement of performance and behavior, competences, and characteristics

Coach: general—satisfaction, general well-being; coaching-specific—self-reflection, experience knowledge, professional skills

Organization: general—achievement of the goals set by the organization, adherence to time and budget; coaching-specific—improved team behavior and conflict management

4. Long-term results (criteria for clients, coach, and organization):

Client: professional advancement, performance remuneration, job satisfaction, stress management

Coach: recognition, remuneration, professional success, professional credibility

Organization: organizational climate and culture, leadership behavior, performance/productivity

5. Characteristics of the organizational context

Transfer climate (promotion of implementation)

The general evaluation model of Greif (2013) is a first attempt to make the evaluation of coaching more transparent by systematically deriving the underlying criteria. Some of these criteria for the quality of coaching have already been substantiated by empirical research, others are based on plausibility considerations and still need to be tested. There are already tested scales for measuring most of the criteria systematized in the general evaluation model (cf. Greif, 2013), which is particularly important for scientific evaluations of the fundamental effectiveness of coaching. For practice-related measurements of quality, these must be aligned with the objectives set by the organization for the coaching program, whereby it will usually be useful to deepen the results obtained in this way through individual qualitative discussions with coaches and clients. The implementation of such evaluations would demonstrate the serious effort to make the assessment of coaching quality more transparent and would make this field of personal-interactive services a decisive step toward professionalization.

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Reducing Decision Error and the Role of Team Coaching

Simon Werther and Felix C. Brodbeck

Case Study: Decision Error in a Team

Initial Situation

In a medium-sized company, a ground-breaking decision regarding the future strategy of internationalisation is pending. The company currently has 450 employees and operates in an internationally competitive environment in the mechanical engineering sector. The headquarter in Germany is responsible for research and development and for all central areas such as marketing and quality, with production located in China. In recent years, however, the competition has increased, and especially competitors from the Far East are making life more difficult for the company.

Solution Approach

A junior executive was sent to China for 2 years to gain a more differentiated picture of the local situation and to identify success-critical factors for the future. Michael has visited the company's own production facilities, as well as other international and Chinese production companies in China. During his time abroad, he sent back regular reports to the management in Germany but never received feedback. He

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returned to Germany unsettled and, a few weeks after his return, he found himself in a management meeting where a board decision had to be made on the future internationalisation strategy.

Concrete Process of Wrong Decision

The meeting was opened by Christopher, who has been with the company for three decades and had been the company's managing director for 10 years. Christopher emphasized that numerous discussions had taken place in the run-up and that a clear trend had emerged. Gradually, the deputy managing director and leading divisional managers are asked for their opinions. They all agree that the current internationalisation strategy should be maintained, as this is the only way to ensure the protection of the company's intellectual property. This would mean that there would be no fundamental changes and that China would continue to be used for production only. Michael is very surprised about this early conclusion. His recommendations, based on 2-year of experience in China, are to go in a completely different direction. However, when it comes to his turn, he would have to stand up with his opinion against all the long-standing managing directors and the divisional managers. He briefly agrees with the previous opinions, although in his heart he is convinced that this is the wrong internationalisation strategy.

Result of the Decision

In the months following the decision, the continuation of the current internationalisation strategy is pushed forward. One year later, however, it becomes clear that the problems are becoming more and more acute. In the meantime, the main competitors have established operations in China, which can react to new trends more cheaply and quickly.

Theoretical Background Decision Errors in Groups

Our practical example illustrates that decision errors by groups can have far-reaching consequences. But how can decision errors such as this be reduced?

Process Losses and Gains in Group Work

Ultimately, any tasks and decisions can be handled by one or more people (Brodbeck & Guillaume, 2009; Schulz-Hardt & Brodbeck, 2012). The process of information management is a critical element in groups and teams. In this chapter, we focus on collective decision situations where the mobilisation and systematic integration of the knowledge *of several* people are central.

Which factors contribute to improved decision-making? Here, a distinction between motivation and coordination is useful, as shown in Table 1. Some other aspects cannot be directly assigned to the perspective of motivation or coordination, although they have an influence on process losses and gains (Brodbeck, 1999).

Decision-Making in Groups

We start with the meaning of collective memory. We will then move to discuss theoretical approaches to collective problem solving and decision-making, as these

Table 1 Process losses and gains from the perspective of motivation and coordination

	Process losses	Process gains
Motivation	Social loafing or low performance standards can be problems at this level. A distinction must be made between a delivery debt (*I must share my existing knowledge with the other team members*) and a collection debt (*I must ask other team members for their knowledge*)	Social compensation is a possible aspect here, i.e. a strong team member makes all the more effort because he or she sees the team success endangered by a weaker member. If the individual performances are well identified and comparable performance levels are achieved, one can speak of social competition
Coordination	A classic problem of coordination can be located in brainstorming or other methods of generating ideas and solutions. Status-high team members are often given more consideration than others, so that suboptimal decision criteria lead to worse results	Process gains through coordination could be identified in electronic brainstorming, for example. Better results can be achieved if the stimulation of other participants is not provided automatically but according to individual needs
Individual empowerment	The focus here is on social interaction within the group and its effect on individual performance. As soon as another group member has expressed an idea or opinion, the own focus is automatically switched to the category of the expressed idea or opinion, so that creativity is restricted	In contrast to individual empowerment as a loss of process, cognitive stimulation can of course also have a positive effect. In concrete terms, this means that the idea or opinion of another group member gives rise to completely new categories and ideas that would not otherwise have arisen otherwise

Adapted from Schulz-Hardt and Brodbeck (2014) and DeRosa et al. (2007)

form an important basis for practice. We then present theories on group thinking and distributed knowledge, which also play a central role in decision errors.

Transactive Knowledge Systems

Distributed knowledge resources play an important role in decision-making. Decisions often involve an understanding of what information others have. Wegner (1986) presented this as a central aspect of his approach to transactive knowledge systems. Essentially, you can only take adequate account of the information of the other team members if you know of their existence.

Transactive knowledge systems represent an important perspective. This refers to the knowledge systems of other people, which can enhance the decision-making of the wider team or group. Research has shown that the use of knowledge resources distributed over several people can significantly improve collective decision-making and collective problem solving (Brauner, 2001; Moreland, 1999).

Collective Problem Solving and Decision-Making

In terms of collective problem solving and decision-making, a differentiation between classical problem solving and judgement is very important. In the case of classical problem solving there is a correct solution, which is clearly identifiable. In contrast, judgements are evaluative assessments that cannot be unequivocally evaluated as right or wrong at the time of the decision. Consequently, with regard to the plausibility of the different assessments, social consensus, in particular, is of great importance. In our practical example mentioned at the beginning, this was precisely the crux of the matter. As a result of social pressure, a minority opinion was not expressed and thus not taken into account.

The demonstrability of the best solution is an important aspect here (Brodbeck & Guillaume, 2015). In addition to task characteristics (e.g. thinking task versus assessment task), agreements on conceptual systems also play a major role. This can include, for example, the use of technical language. Just as conceivable are catalogues of criteria that are accepted by all parties involved as a basis for decision-making. The principle of seniority also plays a major role in judgmental decisions, as decisions made by employees with many years of experience or seniority are often given higher weight.

Group Thinking

Bad decisions also result from a striving for unanimity and the rejection and restraint of critical objections; this is particularly emphasized by Janis (1982) under the heading of Groupthink, and confirmed by later authors (e.g. Tetlock et al., 1992).

One consistent factor is the role of a directive leadership style. Other factors included a desire in the group for agreement, thus reducing critical debate (Paulus, 1998).

Group thinking is also often accompanied by self-esteem and devaluation of *opponents*. This sometimes leads to ethically questionable decisions (Sims & Sauer, 2013). Group thinking can lead to team members no longer representing their own opinions, but rather to adapting very quickly to the group opinion ('*it is better this way*, *the others probably know better*'). As a result, incorrect assumptions and partial decisions can no longer be corrected.

Another characteristic of group thinking is time. The pressure of a crisis results in too little time being available to weigh up opposing opinions. This occurred in the case study above, where it was believed the decision had to be made in that meeting.

In summary, some aspects help reduce the impact of group thinking:

- Participatory leadership, instead of directive influence.
- Decelerate decision-making processes, and minimising time pressure.
- Stimulating and supporting the diversity of opinion in the search for alternatives.
- Do not equate group cohesion with thematic unity.
- Splitting a group into several smaller groups.

Group thinking requires a special degree of attention from leaders, as these processes are often missed or neglected during the pressure of a board meeting or a crisis.

Distributed Knowledge

In many cases, some or all of the people involved in a decision-making process possess unique knowledge (undivided information) that is relevant to group decision-making because it greatly changes the assessment of the situation—this is what is known as a *hidden profile*. The best possible decision can only be realised if the *undivided* knowledge is (shared) and is available to the group. Often groups do not manage to communicate and integrate the knowledge available. This is because shared information, i.e. information available to several group members, is given far more weight than others. Research has repeatedly shown that hidden profile situations are rarely solved (Stasser & Birchmeier, 2003). Furthermore, time pressure increases the risk of such information being missed (Bowman & Wittenbaum, 2012). In a review of hidden profile research, three typical sources of error in group decisions were identified. These can be counteracted by skilful moderation of group decisions (see Table 2).

Table 2 shows typical mechanisms of collective information processing that can explain failure in hidden profile situations. In addition, other research, for example, power and restrictive control, play a major role in the development of new knowledge and good decision-making (Scholl, 1999). In many cases, knowledge is deliberately withheld in order to influence decisions or to consolidate or improve one's own position, while distortion has also been found to be used by individuals to influence outcomes to meet their own interests (Brodbeck et al., 2007).

Table 2 Typical errors of collective information processing and possible remedies

Negotiation focus	Distortion of discussion	Valuation distortion
Benefit maximisation plays a major role in group decision-making. This works well when all parties involved have the same information. It becomes problematic when an orientation towards individual preferences of the decision-making process takes place although the parties involved have different information As a moderator, one should ensure that individual preferences are not discussed prematurely before all relevant (and possibly undivided) information has been exchanged	From a purely statistical point of view, shared information is discussed in more detail and addressed more often, as several people have the same information. In the case of undivided information known to only one or a few persons, the probability decreases accordingly As a moderator, you should ask specifically for information that only one or a few participants have, e.g. because they are experts in a particular domain	If one assumes the ideal case, that not only individual preferences were discussed and all information was (shared), then there is still the possibility of a distortion of evaluation; information shared by many is considered more credible. It has been socially validated As a moderator one should therefore also use and propagate alternative forms of validation of information (e.g. factual, logical, empirical, statistical)

Brodbeck et al. (2007)

Collective Learning

In addition to individual learning, the importance of collective learning must not be neglected when making decisions in groups. Classic team development measures, such as coaching and the agreement of team norms, can be useful in this context. The role of reflection and critical examination of one's own communication has been found to be useful (Schippers & Homan, 2009). The continuous identification and consideration of *lessons learned* can also support systematic collective learning. In these situations, it is important to constantly question and critically reflect on the current state of affairs and the behaviour across the group to ensure all voices are heard and key information is shared.

Practical Implications for Coaches

From the above-mentioned theoretical principles on decision errors in teams, a variety of implications for coaches can be derived. We start with a general reflection on leadership and decision-making behaviour and then present some concrete methods that build on the theoretical foundations of the previous sections.

Reflection of the Leadership Behaviour

- Does your coaching client, together with his/her colleagues or employees, regularly reflect on their own cooperation and decision-making behaviour? How can continuous reflections of this kind be guaranteed? The integration of regular meta-reflections with your own colleagues or employees can reduce poor decision-making.
- Does your coaching client know the knowledge resources of his colleagues and employees, in general, but also in relation to the specific topics and decisions? How can your client better understand what colleagues know?

Reflection of the decision behaviour:

- Which team standards are valid and how is their effectiveness reviewed?
- How are majorities and minorities opinions dealt with in decision-making processes?
- How does your coaching client deal with time pressure and external disruptive factors?

There are clearly many different starting points to develop practical implications from the theoretical foundations. In the following sections, we will discuss concrete methods that can help the coach in this regard.

Avoiding Distortion of the Discussion

Initial Situation

The client should be supported in recognising the distortion of the discussion within himself and others and have strategies to manage these at an early stage.

Methodical Procedure in Coaching

1. Using the Critical Incident Technique, the client should describe a particularly positive case and a negative case in as much detail as possible. The coach asks for clarification of any points.
2. The coach captures the central aspects of the positive and negative decision situations, for example on a flipchart.
3. The client is invited by the coach to take different perspectives on the two decision situations: *What would your finance colleague say if they described this decision situation? Which aspect would your marketing director notice as particularly negative when we talk about this situation?*
4. Together, the client and coach reflect on what information played a role in the two decision-making situations. For example, why was it possible to take all relevant

information into account in the positive case, whereas this was not possible in the negative case? Which framework conditions were different? In what way did the client behave differently?
5. The coach accompanies the client in identifying and defining personal success factors and adjusting these for future decision-making situations.

Building Transactive Memory Systems

Initial Situation

Transactive memory systems, or a knowledge map of a team, are important prerequisites for avoiding decision errors in groups. The client could work on mapping his or her colleagues, and the wider team's knowledge.

Methodical Procedure in Coaching

1. The client has to choose a group (e.g. a management circle or a department) for which they want to work out a knowledge map. This group of people should be characterised by the fact that they regularly work together on tasks. In the beginning, the cooperation of the group should be described in detail by the client.
2. In a second step, the client uses a flipchart with a pre-structure as shown in Table 3. Accordingly, the group members (including the client himself) should be assigned different areas of knowledge for which they are experts. In addition, professional (decision-making) situations in which this expert knowledge is particularly important are collected.
3. Based on this knowledge map, the client can analyse past decision-making situations in this group and reflect on whether the experts who have built up special expertise for the relevant topics have actually been given special consideration. If not, then strategies can be developed to enable their input to future decisions.
4. This knowledge map can then be discussed and expanded together with the other group members. On this basis, it can also be used explicitly in decision-making situations to facilitate the contribution of knowledge experts, even if they hold minority opinions.

Table 3 Example for the development of transactive memory systems

Name of the person	Expert in...	Relevant situations...
Person X	Conflict management in an intercultural context	Posting of employees abroad, recruitment of international colleagues
Person Y	Cooperation of interdisciplinary teams	Complex projects between departments, decisions across specialist topics

Conclusion

In this chapter, we note decision errors in teams can have serious consequences. What these errors have in common, is that they occur in complex group situations where there is often a time pressure. Coaching can provide valuable starting points to trigger greater self-reflection among the team members involved and reduce decision errors through making the best use of the information available across the group.

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Resilience—A Fashionable Trend or a Paradigm Shift in Prevention and Coaching?

Anja Limmer and Astrid Schütz

Resilience Between Megatrend and Paradigm Shift

Kim, the almost 50-year-old freelancer of a real estate agency, has been under medical treatment for several years because of cardiac vascular constrictions. They hardly cause any complaints but increase the risk of a heart attack. As the heavy professional and private stress described by Kim represents further health risk factors and Kim *does not* see himself *as the type for relaxation exercises*, his doctor suggests that he should seek professional support. In an initial consultation, Kim describes his everyday life, which is mainly characterized by a dissolution of the separation of work and leisure time, and complains that his customers expect constant availability, especially in the evening or at weekends. Due to longer absences of colleagues due to illness, the workload is spread across fewer shoulders, and the deadline pressure increases. Kim sees hardly any possibilities to compensate for the burden, as he has separated from his wife, especially after a long period of indecisiveness, and thus experiences many challenges in his private life as well, from the living situation to the contact and relationship with his 14-year-old son. Nevertheless, he does not consider himself to be at *risk of burnout*, as he takes time off during the day, for example, when there are no customer appointments. Nevertheless, he hopes that coaching will help him to cope with this critical phase of his life in a more structured and emotionally less stressful way.

The challenge of coping with modern living environments has traditionally been studied in research under the focus "*What makes people ill?*" (Lyssenko et al., 2010). The resulting insights and interventions can help to reduce potentially damaging risk factors and provide a rich basis for addressing coaching issues such as stress and burnout prevention. The view was broadened by the model of

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salutogenesis (Antonovsky, 1979) which explains how we can successfully cope with stress. From this perspective, the central question is *what keeps people healthy*. Especially since the 1990s, the focus has shifted from the development of disease to the development and maintenance of health (Bonß, 2015). This has also led to a broader perspective in prevention research: it is no longer just a matter of avoiding the occurrence of stressful situations by means of preventive measures, but rather of establishing conditions and behavior patterns that promote physical and mental health—even under adverse conditions. Since stressful living conditions or events can hardly be avoided completely, people should be enabled to deal with them effectively. The concept of mental resistance was developed: resilience.

Looking at the use of the term *resilience* in publications and Internet entries, a sharp increase can be seen from the year 2000 onwards (Bonß, 2015). An own internet research on the keywords *resilience* and *coaching* delivered more than 100,000 results at the beginning of 2015 and more than 33.5 million results at mid-2020. The popularity of the topic of resilience is beyond question, but does it represent a substantial new paradigm for research and consultancy, or is it still a trendy container concept?

Resilience in Theory and Research

The term resilience (from the Latin *resilire,* i.e., to jump back, bounce back, rebound), which originally comes from technology, has now become established in the human sciences. The property of materials not to break during deformation, but to return elastically to their original state, is also a vivid analogy in relation to humans. This understanding is reflected in the various psychological definitions according to which resilience can be characterized "by either (. . .) stable mental health during or after a period of adversity or by a pattern of temporary disturbances that is followed by a relatively rapid and successful recovery" (Chmitorz et al., 2018, p. 79).

In addition to psychology, since the 1970s, resilience has also been mentioned in ecology—as the ability of ecosystems to change in the event of disturbances in such a way that their essential functions, structure and identity are preserved. Furthermore, resilience today is related to a broad spectrum of social, economic and institutional threats and sensible strategies for dealing with them (Bonß, 2015).

Psychological Resilience Concepts

As the first sub-discipline of psychology, personality psychology took up the resilience concept to formulate a personality model with the two dimensions of ego control and ego resilience (Block & Block, 2006). However, the concept became well known through the developmental psychologist Emmy Werner, who began a

long-term study in the 1950s on the Hawaiian island of Kauai to track the developmental conditions and opportunities of 698 children over decades (Werner, 2012): About a third of the children who grew up under the most difficult conditions did not show any problems later on, but developed into successful and psychologically healthy personalities. They were obviously *resistant to* negative initial conditions. In the following period, the resilience concept also gained importance regarding research on resistance in adulthood. With the aim of strengthening resilience in different life situations, the focus is now on the goal of preventive promotion of resilience (see also Pietsch & Schumacher, 2009).

A closer look at these approaches to human resilience quickly leads to questions: Is resilience a personality trait, specific behavior, or an interactive process? Is resilience changeable? If so, how can resilience be learned or encouraged? How can resilience and, if necessary, its change be measured? In order to find answers to these questions in the following sections, we first present the two prevailing psychological perspectives (Brinkmann, 2014): Resilience as a stable characteristic of persons and resilience as person-environment interaction.

Resilience as a Stable Characteristic of the Person across Situations

The original term ego-resilience describes an ideal-typical pattern of personality traits. Accordingly, resilience is not a one-off behavior but shows itself to be stable over time and across situations (Block & Block, 2006), including through more flexible adaptability, social competence and the ability to reflect. This perspective is supported by the fact that ego-resilience as a personality pattern could be replicated in different age groups and in different cultural contexts (Asendorpf & Aken, 1999). Relationships to certain personality variables, such as intelligence and self-esteem, become apparent (Lyssenko et al., 2010). However, a purely static understanding of resilience could not be maintained. According to the current state of research, resilience is not a constantly given, inherited trait—it can change and develop throughout life (Götze, 2013). This led to a transactional understanding.

Resilience as Dynamic, Transactional Person-Environment Interaction

In the transactional concept, resilience is understood as a dynamic concept that results from a concrete person-situation interaction. Personality traits and environmental factors interact to influence the development of resilience (Brinkmann, 2014). The individual degree of resilience depends on previous coping processes and current risk and protection factors (Wustmann, 2009). According to Bengel and Lyssenko (2012), this understanding of resilience has the following characteristics. She is

- *Dynamic,* i.e., changes as a process over time and can be acquired through the person's active engagement with their environment.

- *Variable*, i.e., changeable over the entire life span.
- *Situation-specific*, i.e., can be differently pronounced for different stressors, e.g., different professional changes, and.
- *Multidimensional*, i.e., it can involve different coping efforts in different areas of life and competence, such as intellectual performance and social competence.

Overlap and Distinction from Other Concepts

Resilience focuses on the successful management of stressors. There are thus numerous overlaps (Brinkmann, 2014) with similar approaches (Fig. 1), such as the concepts of salutogenesis according to Antonovsky (1979), the self-efficacy expectation according to Bandura (1997), the Hardiness concept of Kobasa et al. (1982) and the approach of Positive Psychology (Seligman, 2012). Despite gradual differences, e.g., in the respective weighting of personal and situational factors or in consideration of potentially damaging conditions, it is difficult to draw a clear distinction. The salutogenesis approach is often seen as a stimulating framework model for research on various protective factors (Bengel & Lyssenko, 2012).

Resilience is also closely linked to the concept of resource (Chmitorz et al., 2018). Resources are understood to be currently available potential that supports development (Petermann & Schmidt, 2006). These can be internal factors such as genetic dispositions or biological traits (individual resources) and external factors such as social or socio-economic conditions (environmental resources). While resources may be inherited or acquired, resilience refers to acquire resources that are mobilized or sought to cope with stressful situations.
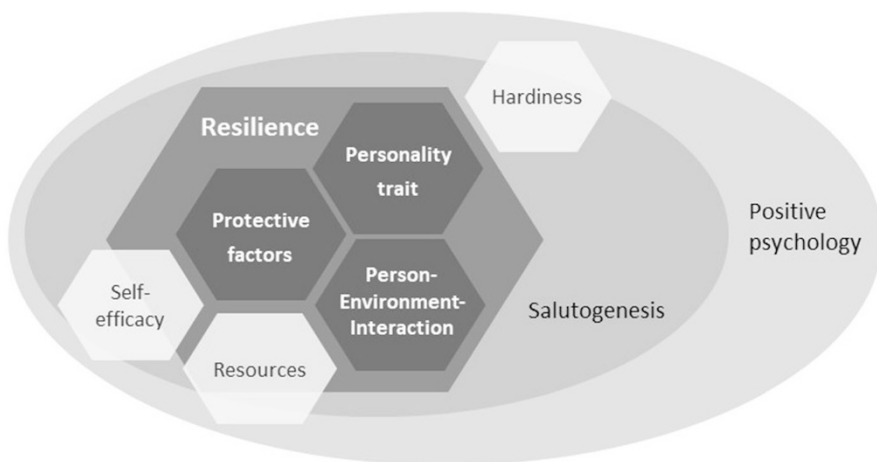

Fig. 1 Theoretical classification of resilience

State of Research on Protective Factors

The concept of resilience is based on the assumption that protective factors maintain and protect physical and mental health in interaction with personal and situational conditions. The basis for the development of resilience is thus seen in special risk-mitigating, protective factors within and in the environment of a person (Lyssenko et al., 2010), which are effective from childhood:

- *Personal protection factors,* such as positive self-perception, high self-efficacy expectations or at least average intelligence
- *Family protection factors,* such as the quality of relationships with parents and siblings, and
- *Social protection factors,* such as social support from adults and peers outside the family

However, most protection factors are not generally effective. Rather, their influence depends on age, gender, the nature of the risk conditions, the nature of the factor and the interaction with other factors. This underlines the interactive and context-dependent process character of resilience.

Particularly relevant for coaching is probably the realization that trust in one's own abilities is virtually the key variable in the area of personal protection factors (Schütz, 2005). In contrast, a central protective factor from the area of the environment lies in the quality of the bond with the respective reference persons.

Furthermore, the experience of positive emotions has a central protective effect. The intensity of positive emotions is less important than their regularity and independence from negative emotions (Bengel & Lyssenko, 2012): Especially in the face of massive stressors, the ability to enjoy everyday things despite the prevailing negative emotions helps. Social support is also important. Their absence represents an influential risk factor. However, it is not so much the social support actually received that has a protective effect, but rather its perception and subjective assessment. There is still a need for research (Bengel & Lyssenko, 2012) into other protective factors to specify their content and effect.

Practical Relevance of Resilience in Coaching

Importance of Resilience for the World of Work

Strengthening resilience in the world of work has become increasingly important in the context of rising demands (Bartholdt & Schütz, 2010). The fact that these developments are increasingly being experienced as a burden is reflected in the increase in mental illness (Vlahovic, 2010) and the associated downtime. Classical stress management programs do not go far enough in this situation, as in addition to

coping with everyday stressors, it is also important to be able to withstand these longer-term and more profound threats. Resilience seems to be particularly important for the development of certain employee groups or contexts: for example, the burdens in management (Pietsch & Schumacher, 2009) and in processes of change have become more acute (Vlahovic, 2010).

In the work context, resilience is not only related to individuals or groups of people, but also to entire organizations and companies, following systemic concepts of resilience (see above). According to Scharnhorst (2013), special factors are characteristic for *organizational resilience*: the workforce is able to accept reality and is prepared for disruptions. Common values and goals create meaning and offer orientation. The organization can improvise and use all resources to solve the problem.

Importance of Resilience for the Coaching Context

First, the adoption of the resilience concept in coaching offers an opportunity to further establish resource orientation and its advantages in the sense of positive psychology in this consulting context as well. Beyond resource orientation, however, there is also specific potential in terms of content.

Studies on executive coaching show that resilience and self-regulation can be strengthened in particular by setting personally meaningful and congruent goals and by providing support when difficulties arise (Grant et al., 2009). Among other things, significant effects of only four coaching sessions on self-assessed resilience were demonstrated. Coaching with a solution-oriented cognitive-behavioral approach also seems to improve the way restructuring is handled. After the coaching, the participants felt more able to deal with organizational changes.

In striking contrast to the large number of commercial offers, however, is the fact that little empirical research on *resilience coaching* can be found (Götze, 2013). Here, research has obviously not been able to keep pace with developments in practice.

Measuring Resilience in Coaching

To build up protective factors and coping strategies in counseling contexts such as coaching and to check their change, existing resources must be systematically collected. According to von Hagen and Voigt (2013), the focus should be on individual competences and strengths as well as the potential for action. Thus, the entire repertoire of solution-oriented coaching approaches is available for the survey (and associated influencing) also in the context of promoting resilience. In addition

to targeted exploration and observation, specific questionnaires can also be used to measure resilience directly.

An example of assessing resilience as stable personality trait is the Resilience Scale by Wagnild and Young (1993). Of particular interest for the coaching sector is that work-related resilience scales have now also been developed. For example, the *Workplace Resilience Inventory (WRI)* by McLarnon and Rothstein (2013) is based on a dynamic process model and records the resilience of individuals in organizations. The German-language *Inventory of Resilient Behavior (REVERA)* by Kolodej et al. (2013) focuses on eight protective factors, which also contain action-related components and thus offer direct points of reference for interventions. Overall, the breadth of theoretical approaches is reflected in the variety of survey instruments.

Development of Resilience in Coaching

Resilience can either be promoted as one part of a broader health-oriented invention (e.g., Psychological Capital, see Chapter on Health) or as a stand-alone key target. The common goal of approaches to promoting resilience in coaching is to use protective factors and to search for resources together with the client. The underlying models relate more or less directly to different combinations of protection factors, as the following examples show.

The *Master Resilience Training (MRT)* was originally developed to promote the resilience of American soldiers. It is based on the Penn Resilience Program for schools with the five pillars

- *Positive emotion* (positive feelings)
- *Engagement* (being involved in the activity)
- *Relationships* (trusting relationships)
- *Meaning* (meaningfulness), and
- *Accomplishment* (achievement of objectives, sense of achievement)

According to the argumentation of its initiator Martin E. P. Seligman (2011), the building blocks of the MRT derived from the *PERMA model* reflect the three core competencies of every successful leader: developing mental strength, appreciating one's own strengths and cultivating social relationships. Especially in economically difficult times, companies can benefit from promoting these competencies through a combination of knowledge transfer, role plays, worksheets, and group discussions.

The resilience training *P4C Prevention for Crisis,* according to Pietsch and Schumacher (2009) aims to develop four basic competencies of resilience:

- According to the authors, *assertiveness* as the ability to express one's own thoughts, emotions, and desires clearly but respectfully in an interactive situation presupposes an accepting way of dealing with oneself and strengthens one's independence from reference persons.

- *Mindfulness* means a clear self-perception of one's own emotional processes and inner conflicts as well as their conscious regulation.
- *Clarity of objectives and process openness* characterize the task of creatively developing, formulating, and implementing objectives under changing dynamic conditions. They are intended to make targeted use of the possibilities offered by the current situation and to plan for and overcome any difficulties that may arise.
- *The ability to experiment and reflect* as well as *syn-egoism* are aimed at constantly updating individual knowledge about the environment and the effects of one's own behavior and at building sustainable relationship networks by creating win-win situations.

The method of *Appreciative Inquiry* originally comes from Cooperrider et al. (2008) and places learning from positive experiences in the foreground of a guided reflection process with phases:

- *Discovery: Discovering* outstanding positive experiences in the past and present as well as wishes and ideals for the future.
- *Dream: Visioning* how it could be at best if the identified support factors could be strengthened.
- *Design: Design of* solutions based on agreed guiding principles for the future, and.
- *Destiny: Implementation* through the planning of concrete steps and responsibilities and the awareness and involvement of further resources.

To promote resilience in coaching, the first phases of the appreciative exploration are particularly suitable to make yourself aware of earlier coping successes and patterns, e.g., by means of an interview guide (Siegrist, 2009).

The examples reflect both the theoretical and methodological diversity of approaches to promoting resilience, as well as their overlap with other existent psychotherapeutic methods and concepts, e.g., mindfulness, promotion of self-perception and self-efficacy, or regulation of emotions. The resulting heterogeneity impedes the evaluation of effects across studies and explains the promising yet still limited evidence on coaching for resilience (Linz et al., 2020). In the practical implementation of the models Götze (2013) criticizes that coaches usually show a lot of commitment in building up resources but often do not transparently justify their strategy and methodology behind these activities. In order to improve the transfer of knowledge into practice, it is hoped that further research will no longer look at the social, psychological, or genetic factors for resilience development in isolation but will increasingly attempt to understand the underlying processes and mechanisms of action.

Conclusion and Outlook

The explanations above clearly show that the trend towards resilience development is also unbroken in coaching. Even if previous approaches, e.g., management development, often touch on protective factors (Seligman, 2011), the resilience concept ideally offers a systematic integration of these approaches.

On the other hand, due to the overlap with other concepts and the still fragmented empirical evidence on resilience development, it is not (yet) possible to speak of a paradigm shift. To ensure that in coaching the evidence does not lag behind the hype or that the scientific-theoretical principle of thriftiness is disregarded, a more unified theoretical framework of the concept of resilience is needed (Linz et al., 2020) and must be further investigated. Until more widely tested results are available, a (self-) critical consideration of the preconditions for effective coaching tools (Wechsler, 2013) and of the available—and pending—evidence will help to make the potential of resilience promotion seriously usable for coaching.

Promoting resilience is often a grey area between private and working life due to the immanent link with personal protective factors and the interaction between professional and private burdens. The coach should therefore remain aware that coaching focuses on the professional role and related concerns of the client. Even though some resiliency-related coaching approaches talk a lot about crises and overall—as in other contexts—methods and tools from the field of psychotherapy are often adopted, coaching is basically aimed at healthy people. In contrast to psychotherapy, the functioning ability to control oneself is also an essential prerequisite for promoting resilience (Rauen & Eversmann, 2014).

Finally, the focus on strengthening protective factors should not tempt us to ignore the reduction of risk factors. Due to the interactions between protective and risk factors and from an ethical perspective, it would be questionable not to also reduce existing burdens in addition to promoting resilience. In the case of Kim mentioned at the beginning of this article, too, all the models for promoting resilience presented offer starting points for the coaching process. By relating the respective protection factors and resources to the concrete goals and concerns, coherent solutions can be developed, and thus burdens can be reduced.

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Roles as a Basic Theme in Coaching

Stefan Kühl

Case Study

The fact that an organization employs a coach for several consultations with different employees can have advantages: this way it only must introduce one outsider to the organization. But it can also have advantages for the coach because they can expect regular follow-up assignments. The effect, however, is that the demands on coaches increase in terms of their role as well as the role of their clients: Andrea Franzke and Mia-Alina Schauf have shown in a relevant study that when a coach is assigned several coaching relationships in the same organization, it becomes more difficult for the coach to identify the latent problems of an individual client. Through contact with several members, who are at different hierarchical levels of the organization, a strong integration of the coaches into the organization developed. For coaching, however, according to the two authors, it is indispensable to maintain a neutral view from the outside to be able to analyze intra- and inter-role conflicts of their clients. In the case under investigation, the coach, contrary to their own basic professional understanding, assumed an "internal role within the organization." They would see themselves as a kind of mediator between the different clients in the organization and would therefore overlook the specific problems of the individual members of the organization with their roles in the organization.[1]

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[1] For this study, see Franzke and Schauf 2009, whose account I follow very closely here.

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The Relevance of Roles

What do coaches actually do? In a nutshell, it can be said that they operate in the field of tension between (organizational) role and person. They are called in to ensure that a manager's conflict with their counterpart in another department does not completely block the organization. They are commissioned when the personally stressful experiences of working with difficult t, terminally ill or mentally conspicuous persons are to be reflected in such a way that the service providers can improve their services and remain healthy themselves. Person-oriented counselling is also used when an employee takes on a new task in the organization and the "settling in" should not block them or the organization.

Many of these tensions between roles and individuals are routinely mitigated in organizations: by making sure that the motives of staff are at least partially compatible with the role of the organization when recruiting, by motivating staff through regular cash payments or by offering them the prospect of careers within the organization. Or by the fact that the level of expectations of members of the organization adapts relatively quickly to what is possible so that even the call center work, which is initially perceived as stupid, seems attractive (see Kühl, 2011).

In this way, the tensions between organizations and individuals, with their doubts, entanglements, and self-portrayal claims, are only softened but not eliminated. In organizations, there is a permanent search for outlets for these tensions—whether in the form of collegial gossip, small jokes at the expense of colleagues, joint lunches between managers and employees, more or less structured grumbling corners, in-house social counselling centers or even in the form of person-oriented counselling in organizations in the form of coaching.[2]

Role—A Form of Expectation Formation

Even though a multitude of definitions of roles can be found in science as an elementary category of the social, one definition of roles has become generally accepted (see on diversity Griese, 2014, p. 411 f.). A *role is* understood to be a "bundle of expectations" which are linked to the "behavior of the bearers of positions" (Dahrendorf, 1965, p. 26). It is thus a matter of expectations that "a person can carry out", which "are not fixed to certain people," but are perceived by "different, possibly changing role bearers" (Luhmann, 1972, p. 86 f.).

The central concept for understanding roles is that of expectations. Expectations make it possible, despite the complexity of the world, "to orient oneself in a relatively stable way" (Baraldi, 1997, p. 45). Through the formation of expectations

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[2]The following text is based on considerations from my textbook on coaching and supervision (Kühl 2008). Readers with an interest in detailed considerations of the importance of coaching and supervision in advising people in role conflicts should refer to chapter two of the textbook.

it is possible to feel socially secure, to find one's way in a more or less unknown environment. Expectations enable you to know what behavior you can expect from the person you are dealing with and what the person on the other side expects from you.

Expectations can be fulfilled, but in many cases, they are also disappointed. In case of disappointment, one can react in two ways. A first strategy is to change the expectation so that it is adapted to the disappointed reality. A second strategy is to stick to expectations despite the disappointing reality. The first strategy is called cognitive expectations, the second normative expectation (Baraldi, 1997, p. 49).

Person, Role, Programs, and Values

To classify the phenomenon of roles in person-oriented counselling in organizations, it is helpful to understand role as only one possible form of expectation formation. In counselling, it has proved to be a good idea to differentiate between four different forms of stabilizing behavioral expectations: People, roles, programs, and values (the best representation is still Luhmann, 1972, p. 84 ff., but see also Luhmann, 1984, p. 429 ff.)

The first, immediately obvious form through which behavioral expectations are stabilized is the *person*. We know intuitively that what we have experienced with one person cannot be transferred easily to experiences with other people. To be able to develop confidence in people's expectations, we must have experienced them in a number of situations in which they were able to present themselves with their particularities. The stabilization of expectations through knowledge of the person naturally plays an important role, especially for lovers, families, and friendships (cf. Nedelmann, 1983, pp. 174 ff). But it also works for organizations. You quickly realize that people in the same place behave very differently, and the knowledge of these people enables you to know more precisely what to expect (cf. Luhmann, 1972, p. 85).

The second form of stabilizing behavioral expectations is *roles*. This is an abstraction of expectations toward individuals. You expect a policeman—at least in a democracy—to rush to your aid when you are threatened by a criminal. It does not matter which policeman it is for the formation of expectations. In roles, the expectation is not linked to a specific person, but rather to a bundle of expectations that is summarized in a role.

A third way in which behavioral expectations are stabilized is through *programs*. In short, programs are rules for making the right decisions. They often take the form of if-then rules: "When you come to a stop sign, all the wheels of the car must come to a stop." However, the program can also take abstract forms, such as a call for 15% new customers by the end of the year. It is particularly important for organizations that programs can be changed without "persons or roles losing their identity" and that, conversely, the validity of programs is not affected by the fact that "concrete people die or certain roles are vacant" (cf. Luhmann, 1972, p. 88).

The fourth and most abstract form of stabilizing behavioral expectations are *values* in the form of "we are sustainable," "we are handicapped accessible," "our employees are our most important capital," or "our customers are kings." Although such values represent behavioral expectations, they leave open which actions are expected in a concrete situation. Because of their abstractness, values have "high chances of consensus," but are ultimately full of practical contradictions. How far should we go in terms of sustainability? Is it okay to kill for it in an emergency? How should one behave if a behavior is beneficial to the "king customer" but harms the employees—the "most important capital" of the company (cf. Luhmann, 1972, p. 88 f.).

Conflicting Role Expectations

Expectations do not mesh neatly, but often come into conflict with each other. One is confronted with contradictory programs, the values do not fit the programs, the expectations in one role are contradictory in themselves and, moreover, do not fit the expectations placed on one from other roles. One of the characteristics of modern societies is that we are confronted with a multitude of contradictory expectations. In role theory, a systematic distinction is made between two role conflicts.

The inter-role conflict refers to contradictory expectations between several roles of a person. You are torn between the expectations that are placed on you as an organizational member, life partner, and parent. The effect is an overload of roles, which manifests itself in various phenomena of interest to coaches, such as burn-out.

Intra-role conflict refers to conflicting expectations in the different segments of a role. Even within one role, one is confronted with the demands of different reference groups. A teacher, for example, in his or her role as a teacher, is exposed to very different expectations from students, school management, colleagues, and parents, while a sales representative must meet the demands of her superiors, colleagues, and customers.

Relevance of Role Concept for Coaching

In organizational reality, there are permanent tensions between these different mechanisms for stabilizing behavioral expectations: People do not fit into the roles intended for them without problems or do not recognize the usefulness of programs. Or the programs do not reflect the organization's externally proclaimed values (see Birgmeier, 2006). Coaches work on problems of fit between people on the one hand and roles, programs, and values on the other. These machined fit problems can take very different forms. Individuals cannot cope with the fact that the nature of their organizational role has changed after a restructuring. They may suffer from programs—for example, management objectives—that they consider unattainable. Or,

as individuals, they cannot cope with the fact that the values proclaimed by the organization contradict the role requirements to which they are exposed on a daily basis. One can observe this work on fit problems on typical assignments of coaches.

Conflicts in Organizations

A central field of work for coaches is the conflicts that develop in a company, an administration, a hospital, or a university. People-oriented consultants are called in when members of the organization are highly involved in a conflict, when there is the impression that the dynamics of the conflict are absorbing more and more time and attention, and when the conflicts threaten to increasingly encroach on the privacy of the organization's members. If conflicts have broken out in an organization (e.g., Astrid Schreyögg, 2007), then these would often be perceived as personally stressful. Since those directly involved in the conflict are often forced to fight either side, there is a lack of people who can look at the conflict from the outside without bias. A coach can then offer new perspectives in this situation (cf. Schreyögg, 2007, p. 134).

Conflicts always arise when one person (or even an organization or state) informs another that they are not prepared to accept the other's position, but the other party insists on their position. In short, we must deal with conflicts when one side communicates a "no" and the other party is not satisfied with this "no." If you want a salary increase from the boss and they refuse the request, there is no conflict yet. This only arises if the employee or the boss continues the debate on this topic and insists on their position (see Luhmann, 1984, p. 530).

Thus, conflicts do not already exist when there are conflicts of interest (otherwise all societies would only be understood as a single string of conflicts). But most conflicts arise because of conflicting interests. It is interesting to note that many conflictual situations do not lead to conflict. The different interests of product development and production planning do not automatically result in a permanent feud between them.

Conflicts in organizations can develop as conflicts between *roles* or as conflicts between *individuals*. In the organization, conflicts between *roles* are handled as legitimate disputes. Behind the conflict between role bearers, all observers see an organizational conflict and thus concede a minimum of rationality to the conflict. Conflicts between *persons* arise when the disputes are not only conducted as role conflicts, but when persons—regardless of their roles—commit themselves to these conflicts. If persons then become involved in the conflicts not only with their role but also with their identity as a person, then such conflicts may continue even if the situation would suggest a different conflict situation or the persons already take on other roles in the organization.

Disputes that present themselves as conflicts between roles enjoy a different form of legitimacy within the organization than conflicts between individuals. Statements such as "X and Y do not get along" can be found again and again in organizations and very often have their plausibility, but if these personally attributed conflicts take

place in an intensified form, they are interpreted as "cockfights," as "catfights," or as "problems in chemistry" and thus tend to be delegitimized. What role does coaching now play in dealing with conflicts?

The approach of coaches differs fundamentally from that of mediators. In a mediation, the two conflict parties are either brought together in a room for a mediation discussion, or the mediator commutes back and forth between the conflict parties in a so-called shuttle mediation and tries to bring them to an agreement in individual discussions. The mediator always acts on behalf of both conflict parties and can only achieve his effects if he does not clearly take sides. Coaches, on the other hand, always advise only one conflict party in conflict coaching and would violate their own professional standards if they acted as advisors to two conflict parties.

Coaches promise the client more clarity about the "structure" of the conflict, a reflection on their role in the conflict and possible approaches for dealing with it. The promise is that coaches help to analyze the causes of a conflict and to clarify to what extent the conflict is due to the exercise of certain roles within the organization. On the basis of the analysis, coaches then promise to develop strategies for dealing with the conflict and to practice the new conflict strategies in role plays (Schreyögg, 2007, p. 136 ff.).

Newcomers: Getting Used to Unknown Organizational Roles

A central field of activity of coaches is the consulting of newcomers. Joining an organization or changing positions within an organization is often a key experience for members of the organization. It is not uncommon for the first few months in a new position to be perceived as a "crisis event" which is later often interpreted as the "starting point for success or failure" in the career of an organization member (cf. Schreyögg, 2008, p. 8 ff.). The problems of the newcomer in an organization usually arise on three levels: in dealing with colleagues, in dealing with superiors or in dealing with employees.

Building collegiality with employees on the same hierarchical level is central. Through colleagues one is socialized into the informal structures of the organization, from them one learns the little tricks with which one can make one's work easier, and one is dependent on them when it comes to hiding one's own little misadventures from superiors or customers (cf. Evan, 1963). A high degree of discipline is necessary to build collegiality: Signaling communicative openness and mutual respect, curbing competition in the fight for resources or posts and refraining from excessive profiling toward customers (cf. Luhmann, 1965, p. 171). Newcomers in particular are very carefully monitored by colleagues as to whether or not they comply with these standards.

In contrast, the relationship of the newcomer to the supervisor is influenced by other general conditions. On the one hand, the situation is eased by the lack of time of bosses. As a rule, direct face-to-face contact with the new supervisor is limited to a

few time slots. On the other hand, however, it is precisely this lack of time on the part of the supervisor that leads to high pressure on the new employee in these often quite short interaction windows. And the pressure can then lead to the newcomer not behaving adequately, especially during the brief moments of interaction with his or her supervisor.

The situation of the new boss is once again different. The main problem of the new boss is that they are first of all carefully scanned by their employees to see how they behave as superior and how they behave as a colleague. It is difficult for subordinates to assess which leadership style they intend to cultivate, how they will behave in conflict situations and how they will treat the bearer of bad news, for example. The resulting effect is often a high degree of caution on the part of the employees towards their superiors and thus often a "lack of information" that lasts for a long time (see Luhmann, 1965, p. 173). Subordinates, colleagues, and superiors, therefore, place very different demands on the newcomer, and the newcomer has to deal with the different expectations. This problem can be at least partially reduced by separating the audience. One shows respect for the boss, but by bad-mouthing them in their absence, one establishes collegiality with peers. Or, as a new boss, you avoid letting employees know how they behave in critical situations toward their own boss, because the latter might interpret this in an excessively submissive manner.

Coaching does not help to shorten the period of acclimatization. After all, the consultant, as an external, knows even less about the informality of the organization than the newcomer. But the consultation creates relaxation. Person-oriented counselling can contribute to developing a "composure in the face of complexity" during the transition period (cf. Baecker, 2006, p. 5) and to avoiding premature reactions of the client in situations that are unfamiliar to them (cf. Fuchs, 2004, p. 239).

Problems at the Organization's Border

One can differentiate person-centered counselling in organizations according to the posts for which the counselling is provided. With the help of organizational sociology, two types of posts relevant for person-centered counselling can ideally be identified: posts that primarily have an internal effect—these are especially posts with formally assigned management responsibility—and posts that are located at the contact points of the organization with its environment—so-called border posts (cf. fundamentally Luhmann, 1964, p. 220 ff.).

Now, both a whole series of border posts and a whole series of inward-facing posts in the organization are characterized by the fact that no technology exists for them that is certain to succeed. There is no recipe that can guarantee 100% success: how a social worker can reintegrate a homeless person into "society," how a teacher can get his students to learn Latin conjugations, or how a supervisor can motivate an employee to perform special services. Because this causal link between a problematic initial situation (homeless person, students unwilling to learn, unmotivated

employees) and a desired actual situation (integrated ex-homeless person, pupils willing to learn, motivated employees) does not exist, there is a need to reflect on the transition from the actual to the target situation in consultations (cf. Luhmann & Schorr, 1979).

The field of tension in which people at border posts operate is that, on the one hand, they are obliged to ensure that the organization has a good public image, but on the other hand, they also create loyalty to the world outside the organization through their work. A doctor is a representative of the hospital that employs them, but often builds up strong sympathies with their patients, which can sometimes lead to them becoming allied with them toward their own organization.

Outlook—Two Perspectives on the Fit Problems Between People and Roles

The problem of fit between people and roles—and more broadly programs and values—can be described in principle from two different perspectives. The first perspective is that of the person affected by the fit problem. The person feels under—or overburdened by the role, program or value expectations of the organization and seeks an outlet for this feeling. The desperation can be so great that the person is willing to pay for the consulting services themselves, even though the problem was generated by the organization they work for. The focus is then on "personal development," the processing of the joy and especially the suffering of the person being counseled (cf. Schreyögg, 2004, p. 101 ff.). Often, without the organization being aware of it, counselling is used to deal with the person's suffering from fit problems and, ideally, has a mitigating effect on the person.

The second perspective is that the organization identifies a fit problem of the person, for example, by determining that an employee does not meet key role requirements. In the perception of the organization, a new boss has difficulties in informing their employees in a precise manner, or the head of a product development department is not able to establish a "reasonable working relationship" with the marketing manager. Because the organization sees this situation as problematic for itself and does not want to consider other solutions such as dismissing the person, changing the hierarchical reporting channels or introducing new rules, coaching is then suggested to the organization member, which is then often paid for by the organization. It is therefore a matter of "HR development," by which a person is to be better adapted to the requirements of the organization (see on the distinction between personal and HR development Neuberger, 1991, p. 10 ff.).

These perspectives may or may not coincide. It may be that both the organization and the person identify a fit problem and therefore both agree that the organization member should be coached. But more often, the situation is probably that a problem is only perceived from one perspective. There is often a situation where the organization—represented by a superior—identifies a "problem" in an employee, but the

employee themselves does not want to see it. Here, "gentle pressure" is often used to facilitate person-oriented counselling. Sometimes only the person themselves sees a problem. Organizations can ignore over—or underchallenged members due to the role or program requirements over a long period of time as long as the bottom line is that these requirements are met. Finally, their mode of operation is largely based on the fact that they "generalize" their members' motivation by means of monetary payments and therefore only have to take a limited interest in the mental state in which the organization member fulfils the role requirement. Only when the mental state of the organization member has a negative impact on the fulfilment of the requirements does the organization have to feel affected—but then a person-oriented consultation is only one alternative in a whole bouquet of measures, which includes, among other things, a new cut of the job, change of rules, transfer, or dismissal.

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Self-Concepts, Self-Discrepancies, and Their Significance in Coaching

Theresa Friederike Wechsler and Astrid Schütz

Unmatched Expectations of Oneself

Who am I? Who do I want to be? and *Who should I be?* are questions that concern the self-concept of a person. Discrepancies between how one currently sees oneself and how one wants to be or should be are typical topics in coaching. Imagine:

Ying (42 years old) works in a company in the communications industry and was promoted to team leader six months ago. In coaching, she addresses dissatisfaction with her own leadership behavior: *Since I became team leader, I am constantly under time pressure and only give instructions to my employees. But I wanted to do everything differently from my previous superiors, always have an open ear for my employees and respond to them individually!*

In this chapter, we will discuss how to professionally address the topics of self-concept, self-discrepancy and the negative emotions arising from them in coaching. We will first present psychological theories on the topic of self-concept and then discuss diagnostic methods and interventions.

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Theoretical Foundations of Self-Concept and Self-Discrepancies

Self-Concept

Self-concept comprises the *totality of subjective knowledge about oneself* (Fillipp and Mayer, 2005). It refers to characteristics, values, episodic and semantic knowledge content, skills, attitudes, and physical characteristics (Greve, 2000).

The coaching client Ying describes herself as *ambitious* with the characteristic of *reliability* as one of her values.

At a specific time and in a specific context, e.g., in a team session, only a certain part of the self-concept is activated. This is called *working self-concept* (Markus and Wurf, 1987).[1] The working self-concept contains core aspects that are permanently accessible to the person as well as situational aspects, the accessibility of which depends on the concrete situation and motivational situation.

Self-Discrepancies

Self-discrepancies are *deviations between partial aspects of the self-concept.* Higgins (1987) distinguishes the *actual self*, the *ideal self,* and the *ought self*. The actual self represents the current view of the self. The ideal self contains representations of hopes and desires about how one would like to be. The ought self represents the subjective perception of tasks, obligations, and responsibilities. In further research, Higgins et al. (1990) also distinguish between how someone could be (*can self*) on the basis of their abilities and potential and how someone believes they are likely to be in the *future (future self)*. Markus and Nurius (1986) summarize under the term *possible selves* how someone might become (*expected self*), how someone wants to become (*hoped for self*) and how someone definitely does not want to be (*feared self*). If there are discrepancies between such different aspects of the self-concept, there are self-discrepancies.

Ying wants to be a *supervisor with an open ear* (ideal self). At present, however, she requires her employees to work overtime to complete urgent projects. She experiences herself as *authoritarian* (actual self) and fears to be considered *ignorant* (feared self). Management in turn expects managers to support and challenge employees according to their individual abilities (ought self). The discrepancy between her actual self and her ideas of how she would like to be or the demands from the outside have motivated Ying to start coaching.

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[1]In sociological social psychology this is called *role identity* to make clear the social embedding as the cause of activation (McCall and Simmons, 1966; Burke and Stets, 2009).

Negative Emotions Caused by Self-Discrepancy

Self-discrepancies can trigger negative emotions. The self-discrepancy theory by Higgins (1987) focuses mainly on negative emotions in connection with discrepancies between the actual self and the ideal self and the ought self. According to Higgins (1987) the discrepancy between the actual self and the ideal self represents the psychological situation of a missing positive consequence (pride) and is therefore connected with emotions like disappointment, dissatisfaction and sadness. Discrepancies between the actual self and the ought self, in turn, represent the anticipated occurrence of a negative consequence (criticism), which causes agitation-associated emotions such as anxiety, fear and restlessness (Higgins, 1987). However, whether and to what extent people experience negative emotions through self-discrepancies also depends on the relative extent and accessibility of the self-discrepancies (Higgins, 1987).

Motivation for Goal-Oriented Behavior Through Self-Discrepancy

In addition to negative emotions, self-discrepancies also trigger efforts to reduce the corresponding deviations. The self-discrepancy theory (Higgins, 1987) postulates that people seek congruence between the actual self and the *self-guides* (ideal self and ought self) that are important to them personally and that their motivation is directed towards achieving these guides. The predominant direction of the motivation to act differs according to the type of dominant self-discrepancies. Persons with a predominant discrepancy between the actual and ought selves direct their actions primarily towards avoiding negative consequences (*avoidance orientation/prevention focus*), persons with a predominant discrepancy between the actual and ideal selves primarily towards approaching positive consequences (*approach orientation/promotion focus*) (Higgins and Tykocinski, 1992; Higgins, 1998). The feared self in turn motivates people to distance themselves from it as much as possible (Markus and Nurius, 1986; Oysterman and Markus, 1990).

Recording and Changing Self-Concept and Self-Discrepancies

Already when asking about the goals of a coaching session, actual self, ideal self, and ought self play a central role. In many cases, coaching clients name concrete goals at the beginning of the coaching, how they would like to be or should be, but are not yet and expect the coaching to bring them closer to their desired state. Sometimes the aim is also formulated to reduce negative emotions in relation to

Table 1 Exemplary methods for the recording of the actual self

– BIP: Business-Focused Inventory of Personality (Hossiep and Rust, 2008).
– NEO-PI-R UK: NEO Personality Inventory Revised (Costa & McCrae, 2005).
– Work with the method of the inner team (Schulz von Thun, 2013).
– Free self-description in the form of 20 answers each to the question "*Who am I?* (based on Kuhn, 1960).

Table 2 Questions to identify positive and negative aspects of the actual self (Riedelbauch and Laux, 2011)

Questions to identify strengths and resources
– What are you particularly good at as a manager? What do you particularly enjoy doing?
– What professional successes have you had so far? Which of your competences have contributed most to these successes?
– What difficulties have you already mastered, and what skills have helped you to do so?

Questions to identify weaknesses or barriers
– In which areas is there the greatest need for improvement?
– Which of your characteristics have so far hindered you in achieving important goals?
– What do your employees, superiors, or colleagues criticize about you?

professional situations. In this case, self-discrepancies can also be the basis – even without the persons concerned being able to name them specifically.

In the following, methods will be presented with which self-concept and self-discrepancies can first be recorded in a differentiated manner. Based on this, possibilities for intervention are described. The procedure is based on *personality coaching,* according to Riedelbauch and Laux (2011).

Recording the Actual Self

The first step is to determine how coaching clients currently see themselves. Both standardized questionnaires and open-ended questioning methods are suitable for recording the actual self (see Table 1).

Exploration of the actual self should include both positive and negative aspects, which can be implemented by asking the appropriate questions (Table 2). In the sense of resource orientation or activation as an effective factor in coaching (Greif, 2008), it seems sensible to record the strengths and resources of the clients in detail. Existing resources (e.g., openness to new things) can be used to approach the ideal self. In addition to the strengths of the coaching clients, however, the recording of negative partial aspects of the self-concept also appears important, as self-discrepancies often refer to these. They can also be a trigger and motivator, provided negative experiences do not dominate (Markus and Wurf, 1987).

In addition to the perception of the actual self from one's own perspective, the *presumed external view* is also interesting, since people are often motivated to behave in a certain way by presumed perceptions of others. A change of perspective

Table 3 Circular questions to capture the actual self from the presumed view of others

– What characteristics would your superiors, employees, or colleagues attribute to you?
– Describe yourself from the perspective of a colleague who appreciates you very much.
– How would an outsider describe you if he observed you at your workplace for a day?

Table 4 Experience activating methods for activating relevant aspects of the self-concept

– Imagination exercises
– Role plays
– Identifying problematic situations through in vivo coaching

Table 5 Exemplary methods for capturing the ideal, ought, and feared self

– Free self-description in the form of 20 answers each to the questions Who would I like to be?, Who should I like to be?, Who do I definitely not want to be? (based on Kuhn, 1960)
– Desired, target, and feared profile in personality scales
– Miracle question (De Shazer, 1988)
– Clarification of personal values (Hauke, 2004)

can be supported by circular questions (Table 3). These originate from systemic therapy and are used, among other things, to record assumptions about an external view (Von Schlippe and Schweitzer, 2015).

A fundamental question when recording the self-concept is which aspects are currently activated in the coaching situation (*working self-concept*). It can be assumed that different parts of the self-concept are active in the discussion situation with the coach than, for example, during a team conflict in the company. In order to activate professionally relevant self-concept aspects in coaching as well, it is advisable to bring typical job situations to life in the coaching session using specific methods (Table 4). These techniques correspond to the effect factor of experience activation (approach according to Wechsler, 2012). Experience activation also plays a decisive role in interventions to change the self-concept, since according to Grawe (2004), only what is currently activated can be changed. By using experience activating methods, the coach can ensure throughout the entire process that he/she really works with the part of the self-concept that is relevant in the job.

Identification of Potential Self-Aspects and Self-Discrepancies

To record self-discrepancies, potential self-aspects, i.e., the ideal self and the ought self, must be recorded in addition to the actual self. Equally important is the confrontation with the feared self. Structured questionnaires or open questioning techniques (Table 5) can be used to record potential self-aspects. This will focus on the topics *Who do you want to be? Who should you be?* and *Who do you definitely not want to be?* targeted.

The results from the recording of potential self-aspects are then compared with those of the actual self, and deviations are identified. Subsequently, the discrepancies can be prioritized, e.g., regarding the extent of associated negative emotions or the personal relevance for the coaching clients.

Capturing an Outside View to Expand the Self-Concept

Since the external perception of one's own behavior is only accessible to a person to a limited extent, external assessments can be an important supplement to self-assessment. In coaching, it makes sense to supplement one's own self-concept with the external view of other relevant persons in order to broaden the view of one's own self and to better understand interaction partners by adopting a perspective (Schröder-Abé and Schütz, 2011). The obtaining of an outside view can be implemented by means of 360° or multi-perspective feedback. This can be done, for example, by appropriate reformulations with variants of the questionnaires BIP and NEO-PI-R (see Table 1).

Obtaining an external perspective seems to be particularly appropriate when overconfidence is an issue (Kaul et al., 2007). Particularly in the case of managers, there is a lack of authentic feedback from a certain position in the company hierarchy. They, therefore, run the risk of developing unrealistic ideas.

Strategies to Reduce Self-Discrepancies

Once the self-concept and corresponding self-discrepancies have been recorded in a differentiated manner and the deviations to be dealt with have been selected, it is a matter of determining the direction of change. Three ways to reduce self-discrepancies and the resulting negative emotions are presented below (Fig. 1).

One possible way to reduce discrepancies between actual self and ideal or ought self is to *change the actual self towards the ideal or ought self* (Higgins, 1987). The motivation arising from self-discrepancy is also directed in this direction (Higgins, 1987). In coaching, this direction of change is usually desired.

In counseling and intervention contexts, a change of the actual self is generally attempted by changing one's own appearance and interpretation of it (Higgins, 1987). Arkin and Baumgardner (1986) describe two ways of internalizing new aspects of self. On the "personal path", the way a person communicates and presents themselves influences the self-concept via processes of *self-perception.* On the *social path,* a person's communication and self-presentation affect the self-concept through *social feedback* from other people.

When Ying experiences how she listens attentively to an employee in a personnel development interview, this influences her self-concept on the personal path towards: "*I am a sensitive manager.*" If Ying receives feedback from that employee
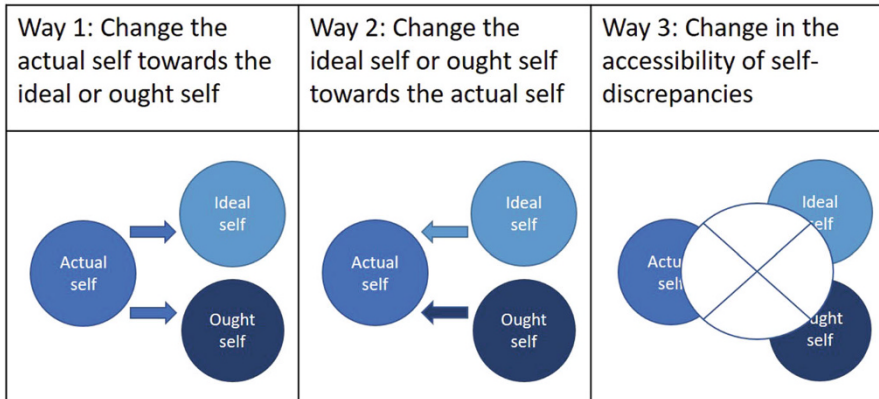
Fig. 1 Ways to reduce self-discrepancies

Table 6 Exemplary methods for changing behavior and its interpretation

– Self-Modeling by video feedback (Renner, 2002)
– Behavioral training, e.g.,
  • Role plays
  • Social competence training (Hinsch and Pfingsten, 2002)
  • Training on nonviolent communication (Rosenberg and Chopra, 2015)
  • Mindfulness-based stress reduction training (MBSR; Kabat-Zinn, 2005)
– Letter to yourself (Riedelbauch and Laux, 2011)

I have really felt understood by you today, this will have a corresponding effect on her self-concept on the social path.

Tice (1992) observed that the social path has a greater influence on the self-concept than behavior carried out alone without social feedback. Obviously, reactions of interaction partners play an important role in the change of the actual self. For this reason, when selecting methods, those that focus on the external impact of the coaching clients play a major role.

When implementing the change of the actual self, it is first necessary to clarify which aspects of their self-guides a coaching client wants to approach. Subsequently, suitable methods (Table 6) can be used to practice new behavioral patterns or to activate resources that are suitable for bringing about a change in self-perception or social feedback in the sense of the ideal self or ought self. In order to achieve lasting changes of the self-concept, repeated new experiences are necessary, which can be transferred into the self-concept (Markus and Wurf, 1987). Therefore, methods that support a transfer into everyday life are particularly suitable.

If a change of the actual self towards the ideal or ought self is not (or only partially) feasible, other options may be considered. A second way to reduce self-discrepancies is to *change the ideal self or ought self towards the actual self* (Higgins, 1987). In psychotherapies, this is implemented by reinterpreting self-guides and their relevance, for example, by using questioning techniques to check

Table 7 Questions for checking the usefulness and plausibility of self-concept aspects

– Is this aspect of the ideal self/ought self realistic?
– Does the implementation of this aspect of the ideal self or ought self make it significantly more likely that the event will take a positive course?
– Is this aspect of the ideal self/ought self helpful in making me feel the way I want to feel?
– What evidence is there that it would be better for me to conform to this aspect of my ideal self/ought self?
– What disadvantages would it have if I were to conform to this aspect of my ideal self/ought self?

how justified, plausible, and useful the respective guides are (Higgins, 1987). Questions from the technique of cognitive restructuring (Beck et al., 1979), which have been adapted for self-conceptual coaching, are suitable for this purpose (Table 7).

As a third possibility, especially to reduce the emotional problems resulting from self-discrepancies, Higgins (1987) mentions the *change in the accessibility of self-discrepancies*. According to the results of Higgins (1987), the extent of negative emotions depends on that accessibility. When a person is less exposed to problematic self-discrepancy activating situations and interactions, the corresponding negative emotions should subside. In coaching, this can be implemented, for example, in the context of a change of situation. Alternatively, positive thoughts and attitudes can also be established in the sense of distraction, which then acts as active self-aspects to inhibit those problematic self-aspects (Higgins, 1987; Higgins and King, 1981). This third way can be used as a temporary, but also as a permanent strategy, depending on the problem.

Ying experiences herself as very authoritarian, especially under time pressure, but this is in discrepancy to her ideal self as a benevolent boss. In the context of changing the ideal self (possibility 2), she questions the usefulness of benevolent behavior in time pressure situations and modifies her ideal self accordingly (*in time pressure situations it is more useful to be authoritative in order to be efficient*). In the context of a change of situation (option 3), it could appoint project officers among its staff to monitor compliance with the timetable, so that she no longer has this role. This way the self-discrepancy is no longer activated.

Self-Optimization or Acceptance of Discrepancies?

Self-discrepancies can be described as differences between the way someone currently is and the (usually high) expectations of an ideal or ought self. Supporting coaching clients in clarifying and approaching their goals regarding their own self is a central task of coaching since it is ultimately about accompanying the clients in their personal development. In addition, the goals of coaching clients regarding their ideal or ought self often have a positive effect on the environment or corporate culture, for example, when Ying wants to learn to be more responsive to her

employees. We have presented in detail the corresponding possibilities of intervention to approach the ideal or ought self. If an approximation to the objective turns out to be unrealistic, at least in part, possibilities for changing the relevance of the ideal or ought self or for changing the accessibility of discrepancies by changing the situation were also described.

All these are ways of changing discrepancies. A fourth way, which has not yet been presented, but which in our eyes appears to be absolutely worth mentioning, is *strategies for the acceptance of discrepancies*. These represent a possibility not mentioned in the context of the self-discrepancy theory of Higgins (1987) and are based on a fundamentally different attitude. Instead of focusing on a change (of the actual self, the ideal self, the ought self or the accessibility of self-discrepancies) to reduce self-discrepancies and the corresponding negative emotions, so-called acceptance-based approaches (Hayes and Lillis, 2012) focus on letting go of states originally assessed as disturbing.

According to the acceptance-oriented approach, allowing negative states to exist and not necessarily having to be eliminated can reduce the intensity of negative emotions. In relation to the topic of self-discrepancies, this would mean to perceive discrepancies between the actual and the ideal or ought self (*I would like to be different than I am at the moment*), but to detach from a negative evaluation of this (*that is ok*) and not necessarily to have to derive an action from it (*I do not have to change that now*). This strategy seems particularly suitable for relieving pressure from those concerned in the event of unrealistically high expectations. Inspired by this acceptance-oriented attitude, we would like to conclude by suggesting that, in addition to the change objectives, we should always keep an eye on the advantages and strengths of the coaching clients' existing actual selves and work out how to strengthen the clients' self-acceptance of their individual characteristics and resources.

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Self-Development and Its Importance in Coaching

Thomas Binder

Case Study: Coaching a Sales Director

Imagine that you are working with Mike, the new Sales Director of an international manufacturer of household appliances, as Top Management Coach. Mike, 48 years old, has broad experience in operational and strategic sales and approached you to accompany him in his new management position, which he has recently accepted coming from a competitor. In the meantime, you have coached him in four sessions, which were mainly about critical situations with his direct reports, but also about decisions in the top management team, of which he, as sales director, is a member.

You experience Mike as eloquent, imaginative, a bit "pushy," but still able to listen. He uses you primarily as a sparring partner and likes to "fight" with you a little. He clearly represents his own convictions and standards and understands how to embed his ideas in an image that is multi-layered and includes various relevant contexts. He is sometimes surprised when others do not take his standards for granted. Although you experience him self-critically, he finds it difficult to engage with the perspectives of others, let alone to explore them on his own. You notice that he quickly takes personal responsibility for many unsatisfactory situations. He effectively implements his solutions for these problems, often talking about the lethargy of some of his managers at the next meeting. Mike enjoys the free and open exchange with you as an experienced coach and organizational consultant. Therefore, he wants to continue the coaching for 1 year. Everything is fine, because he finds your questions, your suggestions, and your expertise very helpful.

Your coaching could continue successfully in this way. As a coach who is familiar with stage models of self-development, however, you clearly recognize

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his developmental limits (cf. Rooke and Torbert, 2005). These are unlikely to be changed by this type of coaching, but

- What could be the developmental limits of the sales director?
- How would they influence his actions—and above all?
- How would you have to coach differently to expand them successfully?

These questions go far beyond the usual coaching repertoire: they touch not only on individual competences or behaviors but also on Mike's self-development. A topic like this is at the interface between personality and developmental psychology. Static personality models (e.g., Big Five) can therefore not cover this aspect of development (Binder, 2010, p. 113).

Background: Constructivist Stage Models of Development

Models of self- or ego development are in the tradition of Jean Piaget's genetic epistemological approach (Piaget, 1970/2010). This assumes that with increasing development, people build more and more extensive structures of cognition, which consist not only of gradual changes but also qualitative differences (stages).[1] These structural stage approaches are characterized by the following aspects (cf. Snarey et al., 1983):

1. Development is seen as the result of fundamental transformations: With each step, the world view—in which one has been embedded until now—is qualitatively restructured by becoming more comprehensive and integrated.
2. Developmental stages follow a universal, culture-independent developmental logic. You cannot skip a stage of development.
3. Development can come to a halt at any time.
4. In principle, the level of development achieved is irreversible. However, regressions are possible.
5. Later stages of development cannot be learned directly: development needs time, examination of oneself and interactions with other people and one's social environment (cf. Binder, 2019, pp. 65–83).
6. One can understand the logic of earlier stages of development but interprets (and reduces) actions of people at later stages of development according to one's own level of development.

Piaget described himself as an epistemologist and was particularly interested in how the "cognitive apparatus" of humans develops. For decades, he researched how people acquire complex skills such as understanding causality. This development

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[1] Piaget"s approach therefore follows the idea of constructivism, that persons or systems construct their reality (cf. Kegan 1982, p. 28).

culminates in the fact that most people have developed a sound formal operational stage of cognitive development by the age of about 20 (Scharlau, 2007).

Within the framework of the structural-developmental approach, further developmental domains were later researched (Garz, 2008). Thus Kohlberg (1984) examined how the judgment of **moral issues** develops. Fowler (1981/1995) was able to show that people (regardless of which religion they belong to) deal with **questions of faith in** very different ways—at early stages of development, for example, literally and ideologically. Other researchers have mapped the development of thinking in more detail (cf. Laske, 2009). King and Kitchener (1994) worked out **stages of reflective judgment**, i.e., how to consider the limits of one's own knowledge. In this way, people at the early to intermediate stages of development deal with poorly structured problems as if they were faced with tasks with clearly identifiable solutions.

None of these well-researched stage models of development has been used to any significant extent in coaching. Beck and Cowan's (2005) Spiral Dynamics approach, on the other hand, which is about **developing values**, became quite popular among coaches. Ken Wilber, in particular, contributed with his publications to the fact that the idea of "vertical development" also spread outside of science. In one of his first books (1979), he already sketched out stages of the self. Later (2000), he showed that different, partly centuries-old religious and philosophical writings reveal similar stages of development as elaborated in empirical research.

Stage Models of Self-Development

The focus of the stage models of development listed above is on individual areas of development (e.g., cognition, moral judgment, faith, values).

- What if there were something like a "central instance" of the human being, which controls the thinking, feeling, and acting of people in different areas of life?
- What could this instance be, how would it be understood, and how would its development proceed?

William James (1892/1963, p. 166), founder of the psychological institute at Harvard University, already addressed such questions in his famous chapter on the self:

"... whatever I may be thinking of, I am always at the same time more or less aware of myself, of my personal existence. At the same time it is I who am aware: so that the total self of me, being as it were duplex, partly known and partly knower, partly object and partly subject, must have two aspects discriminated in it ... ".

Obviously this "central instance" is located on the subject side and one is hardly aware of it oneself (see Fig. 1). James calls this instance the "I" or also the "self as subject."

However, much of the research on the self (e.g., Greve, 2000) focuses on content (e.g., self-concept) or individual processes of the self (e.g., defense mechanisms).
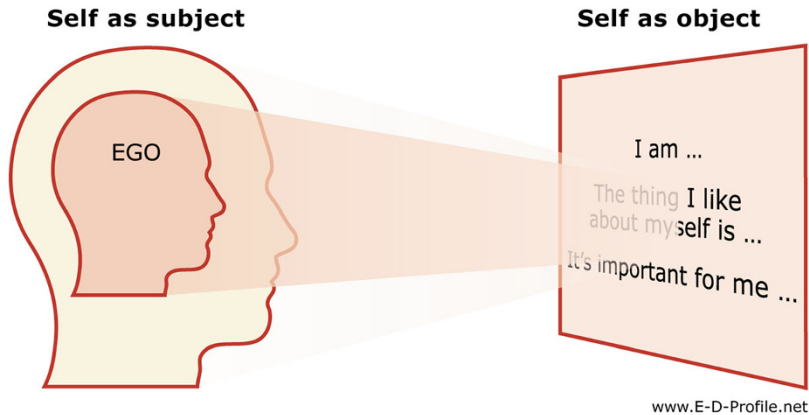
Fig. 1 Two sides of the self: subject and object (www.e-d-profile.com)

Other researchers worked out basic traits in which people differ, such as the Big Five model. Trait models, however, do not capture the self as subject, but rather external attributes of the personality (e.g., highly conscientious, introverted).

However, these approaches cannot explain how a person creates meaning or defines himself at the core of everything he encounters. Trait models also have the shortcoming that they are static: For "personality theories often lack an appreciation of development" (Westenberg et al., 1998, p. 1).

It was not until the mid-60s that researchers began to empirically investigate this "**Ego**" or "**self as subject**" within the framework of a structural stage approach. Two models have gained particular importance in this respect:

1. The model of ego development by Jane Loevinger (1976).
2. The subject-object theory of the evolving self by Robert Kegan (1982).

By concentrating only on those aspects of the subject side of the ego/self that develop in an apparently universal sequence, Loevinger and later Kegan was able to work out the core of self-development. This is also the core to understanding how a client understands his world and positions himself in it. McAdams, therefore, calls the ego in his integrative personality model "director of personality" (1985, p. 129, 1996). The great advantage over normative models of personality development (in the sense of maturity) is that this core is not mixed up with other aspects, such as the degree of self-confidence (cf. Staudinger and Kunzmann, 2005). For example Storch and Kuhl (2013) also stress the difference between "self-access" and "self-development."

This special position of the ego can make models of ego development very valuable for coaching, because clients are usually not aware of their self (as subject). How should one speak about something that is speaking itself? With appropriate practice, however, coaches can (approximately) recognize the ego development level of their clients. In addition, there are instruments for validly measuring the stage of ego development (Binder, 2007) and thus making it possible

to make the ego itself a topic (see Berger and Atkins, 2009). As Mike's coach you could, for example, set an effective intervention by inviting him to confront him with the fact that there is another "director" behind the "sales director:" An instance that he is probably not conscious of, and which will influence his thinking, feeling and acting to a large extent—his ego.

What Is the Essence of the Self and What Is Its Development?

According to Loevinger (1969, p. 85), "the striving to master, integrate, to make sense of experience is not one ego function among many, but the essence of the ego". Kegan (1982) calls this a "process of meaning making." If one compares the two approaches, there is every indication that they describe the same developmental sequence at the core, even if their stage classifications and terms differ to some extent. Kegan speaks less of the "ego" than of the "self" (1982), but refers to Loevinger's approach to ego development (1979). Loevinger also sometimes speaks of the "self" instead of the "ego" (Loevinger and Blasi, 1991).

Loevinger's model is best suited to illustrate the essential aspects of ego development. This is because they have been tested in hundreds of different empirical studies and have been confirmed again and again (in an comprehensive overview: Binder, 2019). The multitude of these aspects can be summarized in four areas (see Table 1).

But what exactly is developing in these areas? Imagine if you could observe four people (Abe, Ben, Claire, Danielle) on their journey to greater maturity in fast motion (days instead of decades). Each time you would only pay attention to one area and notice, for example, the following:

1. **Focus on Character:** You observe that Abe initially gears his behavior exclusively to what he immediately wants. Later he seems to orientate himself more towards others, and even later, he seems to apply his own standards with which he tests the expectations of others for himself.
2. **Focus on Interpersonal Style:** At first, Ben's way of dealing with others seems mainly selfish to you. Later he seems to develop a very loyal and cooperative behavior. Much later, you notice that in contact with others, Ben considers more their decision-making scope and autonomy.

Table 1 Four areas of ego-development

Ego-Development			
1.	2.	3.	4.
Character (dealing with one's own impulses and standards)	Interpersonal style (way of dealing with others)	Conscious preoccupations (areas that draw one's attention)	Cognitive style (way of thinking)

3. **Focus on Conscious Preoccupations:** It seems that at the beginning, Claire is mainly concerned with more external aspects and is occupied with concrete things. Later she names many more inner aspects, such as what is motivating her or how she feels. Even later, you notice that Claire's reflects more on what makes her an individual or what implicit roles she takes on, for example.
4. **Focus on Cognitive Style:** At first, you notice how simple and clichéd Danielle judges (e.g., "A man's job is to protect the family"). Later you notice that Danielle increasingly adapts rules that previously appeared absolute to different circumstances.

Loevinger was able to prove that certain developmental trends in one area are accompanied by certain developments in the other three areas. This parallelism leads to the formation of certain structures of the developing ego/self. These ego-structures form an unchangeable order in which one can distinguish 10 stages today (cf. Cook-Greuter, 2000). Each later stage of development is more differentiated and integrates elements of the previous stages. Table 2 lists the main characteristics of the stages E3 to E10 (updated stage terms according to T. Binder). Earlier stages hardly play a role in adulthood.

Developmental Limits of Mike

Perhaps you already have some developmental hypotheses about Mike? A professional assessment of his stage of ego development would result in a well-developed Self-Governed Stage (E6), a level implicitly expected in senior leaders (cf. Charan et al., 2001). Together with his wealth of experience, this will enable him to fill his new position quite well (see Eigel and Kuhnert, 2005). On the other hand, it is questionable whether this stage of development also enables Mike to deal flexibly, effectively, and sustainably with the manifold conflicts of interest, contradictory goals and subcultures of a large corporation (cf. Kegan, 1998; Joiner and Josephs, 2007; Binder and Türk, 2015). Kegan emphasizes that as each new level is reached, a new developmental limit is set each time. The developmental logic and dialectics of the ego consists in the fact that what constitutes the ego (as subject) at each stage of development can only be made an object (and thus steered) at the next stage. Mike has built up a stable and independent identity with his current stage of ego development (E6). This enables him to weigh up the expectations of the management and his direct reports on the basis of his own standards, without having to be internally dependent on them or torn between them, as was the case at earlier stages of development (see Table 3).

At his current stage, Mike has mostly reached (inner) freedom from others. At the same time, his developmental limit is that he is subject to his own identity, through which he automatically filters everything. If he developed further, he would take a journey whose destinations are only reached by about 10–15% of adults (cf. Cohn 1998; Rooke and Torbert, 2005).

Table 2 Overview of the ego development stages

No.	Developmental stage	Main characteristics
E 3	Self-oriented stage	Personal advantage is in the foreground, other people are seen as a means of satisfying one's own needs, less as a value in itself, opportunistic behavior towards others. --- Rather short time horizon, the focus is mostly on concrete things (less abstract aspects), feedback is mostly rejected, strongly stereotyped actions, eye-by-eye mentality, predominantly external blame.
E 4	Conforming stage	Thinking and acting are above all oriented towards rules and norms of relevant reference groups, one's own identity is defined by them, subordination to their views are predominant. --- Preserving face is central, strong feelings of guilt when other people's expectations are hurt, conflicts are avoided, contacts tend to be superficial, thinking is mainly in either-or categories.
E 5	Rationalistic stage	Orientation towards clear standards, very rational thinking and causal explanations prevail. Motivation to stand out from others. Fixed ideas about how things are and how things should be. --- Beginning self-perception and self-criticism, limiting absolute rules, searching for reasons for behavior, rather narrow professional thinking and emphasis on efficiency rather than effectiveness.
E 6	Self-governed stage	Fully developed and self-defined values, ideas, and goals (owned identity). Strong goal orientation and self-optimization. --- Complexity of situations is accepted, rich inner life, reciprocity in relationships, respect for individual differences (own shadow of subjectivity is often not seen)
E 7	Relativistic stage	Beginning awareness of how one's own perception shapes one's view of the world, more questioning of one's own views (and those of others), relativistic world view. --- Greater awareness of inner/outer conflicts, making finer distinctions, understanding of individuality.
E 8	Systemic stage	Fully developed multi-perspectivity, simultaneous process and goal orientation, systemic grasp of relationships (circularity). Ability to integrate contradictory aspects and opinions. High motivation for deeper self-development. --- Open, creative examination of conflicts, high tolerance for ambiguity. Respect for the autonomy of other people and reconciliation with own negative parts.
E 9	Integrated stage	No longer bound to an explicit system (values, attitudes, practices, etc.), experiences are constantly reassessed and placed in other contexts ("reframing mind"). Highly self-actualizing. --- Can integrate paradoxes, high awareness of own focus of attention, special sense of symbolism.

(continued)

Table 2 (continued)

No.	Developmental stage	Main characteristics
E 10	Fluid stage	The need to evaluate is increasingly suspended, universal morality, merging with the world, no more holding on, but getting involved in the flow of things. --- Playful alternation between serious and trivial, merging of different states of consciousness, thinking in time cycles and historical dimensions, accepting otherness and people as they are.

Table 3 Subject-object equilibrium according to Kegan using the example of two stages

Developmental stage (Loevinger)	Developmental stage (Kegan)	Subject: What am I controlled by?	Object: What can I steer?
Self-governed stage (E6)	Institutional self (S4)	Own identity(s), ideology, world view	Relationships, expectations of relevant reference persons
Systemic stage (E8)	Interindividual self (S5)	Supra-individual principles and values, exchange between self-systems	Own identity, ideology, world view

Consequences for Mike's Coaching Process

What would Mike's journey of self-development consist of? How could the related aspects be brought into the coaching? And what would this mean for your own coaching role?

Self-Development Issues

Mike's main development theme would be to gain more distance from his automated standards and ultimately his self-image. His developmental goal would therefore be a more flexible self—a self that not only understands its own constructions of meaning, but can also flexibly test, experiment with and ultimately steer them (see Table 3). But this development would also be associated with a partial loss of his old self—connected with all the doubts, fears, and negative feelings that go along with it despite all future advantages. For on the self-determined level (E6 or S4) the self starts to defend itself when chaos threatens domestic politics (Kegan, 1982).

This new self ($\geq$ E6 or S4) is associated with further aspects of development that have been well researched and can be explicitly named in a developmental assessment (Binder, 2014b). In the case of Mike, for example, these would be:

- Instead of opposing and discussing, to enter into a joint dialogue.
- To enrich one's own perspective with the perspectives of others.

- Instead of taking too much personal responsibility, clarifying the limits of one's own role and creating contexts in which others develop.

Developmental Coaching with Focus on the Ego/Self

If you want to promote Mike's self-development actively, this means coaching him differently. To do this, you would have to consider and understand Mike's ego structure behind all the content of coaching topics. For this ego, structure creates a certain way of dealing with his themes. If you carry out a developmental assessment with Mike and debrief it intensively with him, you will be able to work very concretely with it in further coaching. Experience shows that this leads to a strong engagement with the action logic determined by the current stage of development.

In order to expand his action logic, continuous impulses are necessary. It would be central to reflect on Mike's previous self-image and to work out what an extended (so-called post-conventional) self-image would look like for him. It should also be discussed what is at stake in suspending his old self-image on a trial basis. To integrate this into his daily management practice, concrete situations with self-development potential should be planned to experiment with his extended self. For Mike, for example, this would mean suspending his own evaluations, questioning assumptions, enduring unresolved or contradictory situations for a longer period or allowing himself to be questioned. This is particularly difficult for managers, as they must resist the temptation to resolve such situations in case of doubt by means of hierarchical power (and thus not in a way that promotes self-development). Another developmental intervention would be "developmental feedback", i.e., to show him the limits of his current stage of ego development in a concrete way whenever they become apparent. One typical cognitive limit of his level, for example, is to see people, relationships, or situations as predominantly static, while at later stages of development, a more and more process-oriented view becomes established.

Coaching that considers and actively promotes self-development is also challenging for coaches. It requires a certain degree of personal maturity (Binder, 2014a, 2019) and explicit solid knowledge about self-development. Otherwise, the above interventions cannot be targeted. Furthermore, this developmental coaching approach requires an expanded role repertoire, for example, to see oneself as a diagnostician who provides appropriate developmental feedback. It is also important to be able to act as a developmental expert who can identify the respective developmental issues behind the discussed topics and show how to experiment with later action logics.

Conclusion and Open Questions

The topic of self-development has so far received little attention in coaching. This is astonishing in two respects: first, the map of self-development has been extensively researched over decades, so that a wealth of reliable findings is available. Second, coaching is a field that is concerned with promoting personal effectiveness and further development. Especially with later stages of development, enormous advantages in all areas of life go along (Manners and Durkin, 2000, p. 477).

Unfortunately, the topic of self-development has so far been overlooked even in systemic coaching approaches. It is considered how a client constructs *his specific situation*, but not with which ego-structure this happens in *principle.* The former could be called micro-constructivism (see Fig. 2).

Stage models of self-development, on the other hand, show structures of cognition and locating oneself in the world, to which people at certain levels of development are fundamentally subject (macro-constructivism). How to expand these structures of the self and make the many scientific findings fruitful for coaching will be the task of the next few years (e.g., Berger and Atkins, 2009; Laske, 2009; Binder, 2010; Binder and Türk, 2015). For self-development requires engaging with others and cannot be learned for itself alone.
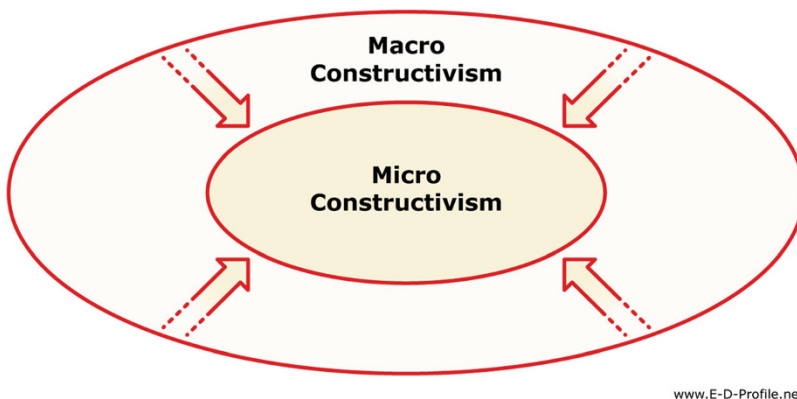
Fig. 2 Micro- and macro-constructivism (I)

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Self-Reflection in Coaching

Siegfried Greif and Christopher Rauen

The Importance of Self-Reflection for Decisions in Complex and Uncertain Change Processes

Case Example: Fears of a Manager in an Automated Company

Peter, 52, works as head of IT in a production area of an automotive supplier company. During a manufacturing process designed for continuous productivity increases, he has seen numerous jobs cut in recent years. Many of his much-appreciated colleagues have taken early retirement. Peter's passion has always been IT, and from a technical point of view he is very convinced, even enthusiastic, about the possibilities of networked manufacturing technology. Year after year, he has made a significant contribution to the specified increases in productivity and is proud of this achievement. However, the thinning of the staff has also led to the fact that he has few opportunities for exchange with colleagues in his everyday work life, he lacks the opportunity to talk to them in between. His workload of controlling, maintaining, and further developing the highly complex system leaves him little time anyway. Occasional meetings with other IT experts offer him a change of pace. Despite all his professional success, Peter feels increasingly alienated from his work and asks himself more and more often where this development is leading. Rumination, uncertainty, and fear of the future have increased. "I wonder how long this can go on. One day not so far away, this grows over my head and I am rationalized away by a younger man!", he describes his concern in coaching. The coach takes up this

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theme, but supports Peter to stop fruitless ruminations and to carry out his reflections in a result-oriented way.

Digital Transformation and Virtual Worlds

Great changes stimulate self-reflection. We have therefore chosen as a case study the reflection on upcoming major changes in the world of work, which make many people think, even if they are not *yet* directly affected by them. For this purpose, we insert a few notes in advance.

The expected digital transformation and virtualization of the world of work and life will lead to far-reaching changes, the consequences of which cannot yet be fully foreseen. The term "digital transformation" covers a wide range of technologies and concepts. Popular keywords include 3D printing, robotics, artificial intelligence, voice recognition ("Siri," "Cortana"), chatbots, autonomous vehicles and aircraft ("drones"), Internet of Things ("IoT"), cloud solutions, big data, augmented and virtual reality. Because the changes in the world of work are as revolutionary as the first technological revolution following the introduction of steam engines, Brynjolfsson and McAfee (2014) in their popular survey of the revolutionary technological changes call it the "second machine age." In a more precise distinction of technological transformations, the second revolution was through mass production with assembly lines and the third with the introduction of computers and IT and the emerging revolution is considered the fourth Industrial Revolution and is also called *Industry 4.0* (Kagermann and Lukas, 2011).

It is foreseeable that the expected innovations will initiate technological transformations that will radically change the way people live and work. Virtual reality glasses like the Oculus Rift, HTC Vive, and PlayStation VR as well as augmented reality glasses like Microsoft's HoloLens can completely simulate environments and allow for a control of the physical environment close to reality. In combination with the so-called social VR, appropriately equipped people can interact over long distances as if they were sitting in a room and overcome physical boundaries in the simulation. Coupling to cyber-physical production systems (CPPS) (Kluge and Hagemann, 2016) also allows the creation of virtual working environments. Virtual Reality (VR) has the potential to completely virtualize entire companies and to save the costs for company buildings. In the simulation of a virtual office world, colleagues appear to be sitting next door, which also allows for dialogues, but they can physically sit in their home office on another continent.

Not only mental work is affected by such changes, but also physical activities can be replaced by increasingly improved robotics, by a program or by remote control. For example, Frey and Osborne (2013) estimate that digital productivity gains will cause 47% of all current jobs to be lost over the next 20 years, while creating new jobs with completely different skills. More recent estimates are similarly high (Peters, 2020). In the opinion of Frey and Osborne, the best prospects are in professions that require creative and social intelligence. Other authors hope that

the job losses will be compensated by newly created jobs and that technology will help to overcome the negative effects of the age pyramid or shortage of skilled workers. According to research by Dettmer et al. (2016), however, many experts fear that, unlike in previous technological upheavals, the job losses can no longer be compensated by new jobs. Peters (2020) discusses perspectives of a world of work, where "lifelong learning is seen as a 'solution' to the need for perpetual retaining in new skills" (Peters, 2020, p. 486). However, in his opinion, this is not sufficient. Necessary is a philosophical reappraisal of the concept of work and start with "a way of rethinking the concept of the 'laboring society'" and a jobless future and not least the impact on both job losses and alternative technological visions by the big international high tech companies (Peters, 2020, p. 486 ff.).

When the world of work changes, this has not only influence on themes discussed and pursued in coaching sessions. If chatbots—as has already happened—pass the so-called Turing test and can thus imitate human communication without clients being able to recognize differences (Bögeholz, 2014), coaching is also directly affected. Although coaching requires creativity and social intelligence, standard questions can also be asked by an app on a smartphone. This has an influence on coaching and on the demands on coaches. In the future, they should focus on skills that an app cannot simulate, and increasingly require specialized digital knowledge and IT experience. This is already evident in initial approaches in the so-called VR therapies, which are successfully used for the treatment of anxiety disorders and phobias (Diemer et al., 2013). These applications show the potential of virtual reality, which also exists in the field of coaching. On the one hand, it allows almost perfect learning and development spaces to be designed and highly individualized to meet the needs of clients. On the other hand, coaching developed in this way also offers a means of counteracting the tendency for new requirements to become overburdened by the excessive complexity and uncertainty of technological changes. Both require corresponding new specialist knowledge on the part of the coaches.

Moreover, digital transformation is also likely to change the way coaching is sought and used. As people increasingly work and live in virtual environments that make (and demand) "everything, immediately, everywhere" available, it should be normal for them to use coaching in this way. The digital transformation with its enormous increase in productivity will also require coaches to be fully available "at the push of a button." In a quickly changing, complex, and highly accelerated environment (a popular acronym is VUCA: Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, Ambiguity), hardly anyone will accept waiting six weeks or longer for their coaching to begin. This has consequences for the entire coaching industry and the provision of coaching services in a globalized, virtual world.

Peter, the IT manager in our case study, is not alone with his uncertainty. According to an online survey of 400 top managers of medium-sized companies (larger than 100 employees) by the HR consultancy *InterSearch, the* companies lack a clear idea of the future requirements for the management of such largely automated production systems. Personnel consultants expect that managers in digitized

companies need a "combination of IT knowledge and social skills."[1] Very far-reaching changes are mentioned in 60 expert interviews conducted by the University of St. Gallen, Swiss, on behalf of Deutsche Telekom (Shareground, 2015). Since this is about leadership principles and not just digital knowledge, the conclusions could be interesting for the manager in the case study:

– Instead of relying on employees, focus more on customers (producers and consumers merge into "prosumers" who, through their suggestions, help to improve the services they want to have).
– Leading at a distance (employees at different working locations around the world).
– Instead of hierarchical leadership more peer to peer.
– Network and dialogue cultures.
– Cooperation with intelligent machines as "colleagues."
– Monitoring instead of executing.
– Supervisors as "Feel-good managers."

In any case, the expected changes are very fundamental and complex. It is not predictable, but rather uncertain what new tasks and changes will come to the IT manager from the case example, what influence he can have on their design, and how successfully he will manage these demands. Coaching can be used to reflect on such changes. It helps to become aware of one's own ideas and actions and to gain more clarity about the future situation and make professional decisions. Self-reflection supports enlarged horizons and also concrete planning of action and it empowers setting goals for self-change.

The Importance of Reflexivity in Complex, Post-Traditional Societies

The sociologist Giddens (1991) has dealt with the question of how people and organizations can make decisions in today's modern world. As he notes, modern institutions differ in the dynamics of global change by dissolving traditional habits and customs. This leads to complex global changes, but at the same time influences day-to-day social life up to the most personal aspects of individual experiences (Giddens, 1991, p. 1).

The post-traditional, modern order replaces the sureties of tradition and habit with the principle of radical doubt, questioning everything and considering knowledge only as hypothetical (Giddens, 1991, p. 2). The fewer traditions provide support and the more diverse the options between which individuals have to choose anew every day, the more important it is to institutionalize self-reflexivity as a "reflexive project of the self," which consists in developing a coherent, continuously revised

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[1] http://www.intersearch-executive.de/news.asp?news=62 (retrieved Dec 16th 2016).

self-identity despite these uncertainties (Giddens, 1991, p. 5). Stelter (2013), based on the analysis of Giddens, sees the importance of coaching in opening a "reflective space" with "time for self-reflection" about new possibilities for action and the search for meaning (Stelter, 2013, p. 412; see chapter: Meaning as a theme in coaching). To put it pointedly: *The importance of coaching in post-traditional societies lies in the professional support of reflexivity as a basis for individual and organizational decisions in complex and uncertain social changes*. However, neither Giddens nor Stelter already refer to the digital revolution, mentioned above. The complex and uncertain changes caused by these technological transformations create additional and new challenges for the maintenance of self-identity. As the introductory example shows, intelligent systems particularly challenge people's intellectual abilities and thus their self-identity. In addition to self-reflection, they require reflection on technological changes.

Since self-reflection and self-concept are of great importance for coaching, the following section will deal with the theoretical foundations and current scientific research.

Self-Reflection and Self-Concept: Theoretical Foundations

Self-reflection is one of the great classical themes of philosophy and psychology. With his sentence "Cogito ergo sum" ("I think, therefore I am"), the French philosopher René Descartes (1596 to 1650) took conscious thinking about oneself as the starting point for his epistemology. Following on from Descartes, the developmental psychologist Eckensberger (1998) points out that people distinguish themselves as *potentially self-reflective subjects* from other living beings because they are not only able to think, but also to think about themselves and to talk about themselves with others. According to Argyris (2002) reflexive learning is a higher form of human learning. The learners do not just copy what other people are doing, but think about given goals or processes and about what improvements or changes are possible before acting. Modern operational methods of self-directed learning (see chapter: Learning as a basis of coaching) as well as expert recommendations for the design of future learning in the digital transformation (Shareground, 2015) require reflexive learning.

William James (1905) is one of the first classics of psychology who analyzed how people perceive themselves and how they think about themselves. He distinguishes between (James, 1905, p. 176 ff.):

A. The *"Me"* or *perceived or reflective self as an object* or "empirical ego" as we know us from self-observation of our experiences and feelings. It is divided into three parts: 1. what belongs to me *materially*, like my body or possessions, 2. the Social Me (self-appreciation aroused by feelings and emotions and recognition by others), and 3. Self-seeking and self-preservation (my spirituality and my moral aspirations).

B. The I or *"pure ego"* and the self as a knower (an abstraction of the conscious thinker, who by a constant stream of thoughts, is aware that it is he who acts and thinks that "I am always the same").

The construct of the "pure I" is very specific and has generally received little consideration in psychology (see the further differentiations of Mead, 1934, see chapter: Communication).

It is noteworthy that recent neuroscientific research ties in with William James' assumptions about the reflective self as an object. For example, Northoff et al. (2006) try to identify activated areas in the human brain in a meta-analysis of 27 studies with neuroimaging techniques in different types of self-reflexive processes. They do not assume that the reflective self is based on a material region in the brain. With reference to James, they assume that the perceived self in its elementary form is a constant self-referential process associated with affects. Depending on the type of self-referential stimuli used in the experiment (e.g. when presenting statements such as "I like London. Yes/No" or in the task of selecting suitable characteristics for self-description), different brain areas are stimulated according to their hypotheses. It is remarkable, however, that apparently the Cortical Midline Structures (CMS) of the brain always play a central, possibly mediating role. As a perspective, they consider a three-level model plausible, which distinguishes simple *sensory*, *experience-based,* and *higher cognitive processes* in self-reflection. As they themselves note, however, more new questions are developing in this current field of research than there are already assured answers.

Self-Concepts and Self-Reflection in Coaching

Tony Grant refers to the importance of self-observation as the basis for self-reflection in the self-regulated actions of the client (see chapter: Goals in coaching). It is based on the general self-regulation theory of Carver and Scheier (1998). Greif (2008) integrates into his theory *of Result-oriented Coaching* (see chapter: Definition and concepts of coaching) research findings on the development and change of the self-concept from various fields of psychology (see chapter: Self-Concepts, self-discrepancies and their significance in coaching). The *individual self-concepts of a persons are* understood as "the totality of all conscious, subjectively important images that the persons have of themselves as real or ideal persons, including all characteristic and subjectively important goals, needs, characteristics and development potentials as well as norms and rules by which they orient themselves or strive to orientate" (Greif 2008, p. 24). The *real self-concept* refers to the self-descriptions of the person as they see themselves at present. In contrast, the *ideal self-concept is* based on ideal images that the person strives to achieve. Discrepancies between the two self-concepts can activate negative feelings and the motivation to overcome them through goal oriented behavior, possibly with coaching support (see chapter: Self-Concepts, self-discrepancies and their significance in coaching and chapter:

Communication as a method and theme in coaching). Both self-concept and identity are concepts searching for answers to the question "Who am I?" However, *"identity"* usually refers additionally to attributes that make the person appear unique or unmistakable (related to the "I" as defined by James, 1905, see p.201 f.).

In coaching, clients often spontaneously reflect on their goals, needs, or characteristics and compare them with the changes or "ideals" they are striving for. Such self-reflections can relate to very different themes and contexts, such as self-management, leadership, and social skills, conflict and crisis management, self-motivation, personality and potential development, communication behavior, life and career planning, stress management and work-life balance, preparation for new tasks, and organizational changes. Coaches usually use open questions as methods to encourage self-reflection. Also helpful are the so-called circular questions, such as those used in systemic therapies, where it is necessary to take on the perspective of other people (e.g. *"How does your superior feel about you arguing with your colleague?"*). In this way, views and influences of the environment are also reflected.

In order to identify self-discrepancies, open questions or standardized questionnaires can be used (see chapter: Self-Concepts, self-discrepancies and their significance in coaching). Oettingen (2014) has developed a method called "*Mental Contrasting*," in which people are asked to compare their ideal future fantasies with perceived real obstacles in reality. As numerous studies confirm, goal commitment and goal attainment are significantly improved after Oettingen's method is used not only to foster positive fantasies about future goal attainment (naive optimism can even reduce goal attainment), but in contrast to this, planning how to overcome probable obstacles. An example of a non-verbal contrastive method used in coaching is the drawing and comparison of real and ideal self-pictures (Greif, 2008, p. 109 ff.). Thurn and Taxis (2012) compared the two methods in a randomly separated sample of 61 students. The contrasting by the drawn self-pictures then also achieved a high level of goal commitment, as did the verbal method. In a scale for "thinking about wishes and needs," the non-verbal method had significantly stronger effects. All in all, both methods are recommended for comparing real and ideal self-concepts in coaching.

Result Oriented Self- and Problem-Reflections

Individual self-reflections can generally be defined as conscious processes "in which persons think through and explicate their mental self-representations or actions" (Greif, 2008, p. 40). However, self-reflections are by no means always positive. Persistent rumination over experiences of failure or one's own weaknesses is considered a symptom of a state of depression. Even non-depressive persons will often make the experience that their self-reflections often jump back and forth in a circular or associative way and do not lead to any results. Conflicts or unfinished important tasks disturb their sleep and do not let them come to peace even during the

day. In order to distinguish this from pointless rumination, the concept of "*result-oriented self-reflection*" is introduced. Self-reflections are "*result-oriented*," "if the person develops conclusions for future actions or self-reflections" (Greif, 2008, p. 40). It requires high professional methodological skills of the coach to support clients in the most difficult situations and under great stress to carry out systematic self-reflections that lead to good results for the clients. Such "results" are by no means only measurable achievements, but also new insights or aha-experiences, which are realized by the clients directly.

It is remarkable that the sociologist Giddens (1991) refers in his theory mainly to self-reflexivity and identity. Although general societal dynamics of change are addressed, the specifics of a reflection of the societal, organizational, technological, and social context are at least partially neglected. Here it is useful to differentiate between self-reflection and "*problem-reflection*" as another important category. Since in many companies the term "problem" has negative connotations and is avoided, the term "*analysis of the current situation*" can be used as an alternative. A problem or situation analysis can generally be understood as the description of the current contextual conditions together with their hypothetical consequences, in which the actions of persons are embedded. All characteristics that appear to be significant can be analyzed, including societal, economic, technological (physical or virtual), and social aspects, factors, and processes. This undoubtedly addresses a very wide range of issues. However, experience shows that they can all be addressed by the clients in coaching sessions. Here again, it is recommended that these analyses are carried out in a "result-oriented" manner and where necessary with the professional support of a coach.

The promotion of result-oriented problem-reflections together with self-reflections is one of the challenges and both are general *success factors in coaching* (see chapter: Success factors in the coaching process). In the coach competence models analyzed by Kuchen and Pedrun (2006) and Merz and Frey (2011), the ability to self-reflect also plays a central role and is consistently the most frequently named personal competence. This means that the coach needs further training in coaching that explicitly addresses promoting self-reflection processes.

For their work, coaches need regular supervision (Rauen and Steinhübel, 2005). The supervision of individual cases serves to work through the processes that the coach has become aware of and wishes to clarify. Regular and unprompted supervision, on the other hand, serves to work through the coaches' "blind spots," i.e. the aspects that they themselves are not aware of. This is of great importance in order not to let the own problems become those of the clients.

Future Prospects

We risk the prediction that the importance of problem- and self-reflection in coaching will increase even more in the future. Dealing with complexity, uncertainty, and a still faster pace of changes demands competencies from people in the

working world which can hardly be achieved and maintained without systematic and result-oriented reflection. The expected global digital revolution will further increase their importance. The coincidence of immense computing power and high-grade networking at accelerating speed has the potential to mercilessly overwhelm people. All fields in which artificial intelligence and machines are superior to humans or are likely to be so in the foreseeable future, no longer leave behind a competitive workforce whose jobs are lost over a wide area. This will foreseeably happen at high speed. For coaching, this results in themes such as coping with professional existential fears of unemployment, managing resistance to changes and conflicts, negotiating social plans, outplacement, career coaching and lifelong learning (Greif, 2017).

But there are also psychological consequences for those who will or want to share in the benefits of technology. For example, virtual reality allows reality and fiction to merge. Excessive use—e.g. as an escape from an unattractive reality—is therefore likely to increase mental disorders such as losses of reality. Those who do not have reflection competences to distinguish real from virtual reality will face problems that have to be countered by appropriate prevention. These risks and side effects and the possibilities offered by appropriate prevention programs should be researched.

However, technological development also directly affects coaching and the coaching industry: Simple goal clarification and motivation coaching can also be carried out by intelligent apps in smartphones and will only cost a few dollars. For coaches, this means that their coaching services, which are comparably easy to digitalize, are likely to be marketable in the future for only a very limited time. At the same time, however, new paths open for coaches: face-to-face coaching can become more efficient and cost-effective if it is combined with virtual, optimally designed IT learning tools, and intelligent software for the systematic promotion of self-reflection and self-coaching. Such combinations are referred to as "blended learning" or "hybrid systems." However, this requires the willingness of coaches to acquire appropriate knowledge and action skills and to create more and better IT coaching tools that can be used as supporting systems.

And finally, coaches should always pay attention to their strengths and their special responsibility as *congenial facilitators and promoters of a reflected humane use of IT in the interest of their client*s. People are social beings and will certainly not renounce communication and exchange of opinions with intelligent and experienced people and their emotional appreciation and support. What is needed are human coaches who offer their support to other people to master the considerable challenges of the future more successfully and help them to redefine and keep their ideal self and identity in a changing world. Concrete, predictable subject areas for future coaching are planning and implementation of digital transformation, monitoring and maintenance of complex digital systems, analysis and interpretation of complex data sets (Big Data), fear of uncertain job changes, stress, and time pressure in complex assignments with uncertain outcome, dealing with social isolation, promoting lively social contacts, reflected use of intelligent systems and apps (Greif, 2017).

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Side Effects of Coaching for Clients and Coaches

Carsten C. Schermuly

Case Study

Ellen is a real high-flyer and is about to take the next step in her career. She is to be promoted to the Management Board of her company in 6 weeks. She has hired a coach on her own and expects him to give her concrete advice for the new position twice a week. She chose Michael as coach because he himself once worked in a board position. After a few sessions Ellen becomes impatient because she does not get any advice. Instead, Michael reflected with her on what motivates her to become a manager and why she wants to move up to the Management Board. At the same time, coaching takes up more and more space in their lives. She is home even later than she was before. And she has problems to stop thoughts, which are triggered by reflection, in her head. After the last meetings, she asked herself each time whether the change to the board of directors was not too early after all, although there was no concrete talk about this at all. She was so captivated by these thoughts that she could hardly concentrate in a conversation and gave a coworker a wrong feedback.[1]

Michael is now driving into Ellen's company with a queasy feeling, because the coaching demands a lot from him. Again and again the client wants to know from him in concrete terms what difficult situations she will face and what she should do in her new position. In addition, he observes that during the coaching process, stressful situations from his time as a board member are repeatedly activated.

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[1]This is a translation of an older book chapter. The latest state of research can be found in: Schermuly, C. C., & Graßmann, C. (2019). A literature review on negative effects of coaching—what we know and what we need to know. Coaching: An International Journal of Theory, Research & Practice. 12 (1), 39–66. doi: 10.1080/17521882.2018.1528621

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Introduction

Various social interventions such as psychotherapy (Linden and Strauß, 2013), mentoring (Eby et al., 2000) or supervision (Ramos-Sánchez et al., 2002) already deal with side effects that can occur when one person advises another professionally. The situation is different in coaching: here, in both science and practice, dealing with side effects was until recently considered a taboo subject (Kilburg 2002). As a result, the issue of side effects of coaching has so far only been dealt with sporadically, in the literature (Berglas, 2002; Hodgetts, 2002; Kilburg, 2002; Seiger and Künzli, 2010).

However, dealing with the side effects of coaching for clients and coaches is worthwhile for the profession, because "a critical awareness of possible damages [of coaching] would not only help to avoid negative aspects, but also to increase success" (Seiger and Künzli, 2010, p. 10). Research can identify early warning signals and options to prevent side effects (Seiger and Künzli, 2010). In addition to the prevention of side effects and their management, the treatment of the topic makes it possible to inform clients about risks. Coaching is easily attacked by the media through critical case studies (Greif, 2014). Therefore, it is important that individual examples of dissatisfied clients, shared, e.g., via social networks, are contrasted with solid empirical research that allows general conclusions to be drawn about the side effects of coaching. Recent research (Schermuly et al., 2014; Schermuly, 2014, 2015, 2016; Schermuly and Bohnhardt, 2014) starts here and provides a definitional clarification, a theoretical framework and a systematic empirical recording of side effects for clients and coaches.

Schermuly et al. define side effects of coaching for clients as "all harmful or undesirable consequences for the client that are directly caused by the coaching and that occur in parallel or subsequently" (2014, p. 19). The central elements are harmfulness, undesirability and immediacy. The client must experience the effect as negative. After the coaching sessions, Ellen thinks that the change to the board of directors might come too early for her. She experiences these thoughts as stressful. The effect is undesirable. Michael did not specifically provoke these thoughts to achieve a coaching goal. The criterion of immediacy also applies. The unpleasant thoughts of Ellen are due to the coaching and not, for example, the result of a conversation with colleagues.

The definition was deliberately based on the definition of adverse drug reactions from the German Medicines Act. In medicine, the occurrence of a side effect is not the same as a failure of the therapy. Ellen develops temporarily unpleasant thoughts and feelings through the coaching. Nevertheless, it is possible that the coaching will prepare her well for her new role. The side effect can even have positive effects in the long term. The unpleasant thoughts and feelings can lead to Ellen taking further career steps a little slower and thus gaining quality of life. The focus of the definition on the client's perspective should also be noted. Ellen experiences the thoughts and feelings as unpleasant and she is the carrier of the side effect. However, side effects for organizations are also conceivable (e.g. from Oellerich 2015).

The perspective of the coach is the focus of attention in research on the side effects of coaching for coaches (Schermuly, 2014, 2015; Schermuly and Bohnhardt, 2014). Like psychotherapists, coaches work in a profession characterized by communication and intensive interpersonal contacts, which represents a potential risk to their mental health (Schermuly, 2015). In the case study, contact with the client challenges Michael's emotional regulation competence (see Benecke in this volume). In addition, he feels personally affected by the topic. In him too, the coaching continues after the sessions.

After this introduction, the results of empirical studies on the occurrence and causes of side effects of coaching will be presented for both clients and coaches. First, side effects for clients are presented and then those for coaches. The chapter concludes with an integrative summary of both perspectives.

Side Effects of Coaching for Clients

Due to the limited state of research, Schermuly et al. (2014) decided on a multi-stage exploratory research process in which as much practical knowledge as possible should be activated for the topic. In structured interviews with 21 experienced coaches, after the presentation of the above definition, the participants were asked what side effects or negative effects coaching can have and what causes they see for these. The replies were subsequently analysed and converted into a questionnaire. This questionnaire was used in an online study. A total of 123 coaches participated in the survey (age: $M = 49.6$ years, SD = 9.0; work experience: $M = 10.8$ years, SD = 7.7; working time with coaching $M = 37.5\%$, SD = 25.5; proportion of women = 48.8%). The coaches had to evaluate the last coaching engagement they had carried out, regardless of whether it was successful or not. This procedure should help to ensure that the coaches had a good memory of the coaching process and prevent selection by the coaches. The coaching engagements were on average eight sessions long and took just under 8 months. The coaches evaluated each of the adverse effects mentioned in the interview and listed in the questionnaire (e.g.: *As a result of the coaching. ... the client's job satisfaction was reduced*) on a five-level Likert scale from 0 (strongly disagree) to 4 (completely agree).

The results can be summarized as follows: In 57.4% of the coaching sessions, at least one side effect was noticed by the coaches. The average was 2.1 per coaching evaluated. At the same time, the coaching sessions were rated on average as *very successful.* Side effects seem to be very common, even in very successful coaching sessions. The most frequent effect was that, like Ellen, deeper problems were triggered by the coaching, which could not be dealt with in the coaching. The second most common effect was that the client experienced his work as less meaningful through the coaching. Just as often the coach modified the client's original goals against the client's will.

The important result is that the side effects were perceived by the coaches as low to medium intensity. The duration was also estimated to be rather short-term (up to

Table 1 Side effects of coaching for clients

1. Psychological health	2. Social integration	3. Performance	4. Evaluation of work role	5. Material losses	6. Other
Initiating problems that could not be dealt with (26.0%)	Decreased relationship quality: supervisor (13.8%)	Fluctuations in work performance (13.0%)	Decreased experience of meaningfulness of the job (17.1%)	Change of employers with worse job conditions (3.3%)	Change of goals without approval (17.1%)
Decreased life satisfaction (9.8%)	Dependency on the coach (12.2%)	Reduction in work motivation (8.9%)	Reduction in job satisfaction (13.0%)	Workplace Loss (2,4%)	Legal dispute with coach (0.8%)
Decreased work–life balance (8.9%)	Decreased relationship quality: spouse (5.7%)	Decreased job performance (4.1%)	Decreased feeling of competence (9.8%)	Financially threatening situation (1.6%)	Access of third parties to personal information (0.8%)
Job anxiety (7.3%)	Decreased relationship quality: family (5.7%)		Reduction in experience of influence (4.1%)		
Increased symptoms of existing psychological disorder (2.4%)	Decreased relationship quality: colleagues (4.9%)		Reduction in self-determination experience (4.1%)		
Development of a psychological disorder (1.6%)	Decreased relationship quality: employees (2.4%)				
More consumption of cigarettes, alcohol or medicines (1.6%)					

4 weeks). Serious side effects for professional or private life occurred only very rarely. These include the loss of a job and the development or intensification of a mental disorder.

Schermuly (in print) divided the effects into five categories (plus one category "other") (Table 1). The categories of *personal well-being* and *social integration of* the client are where most side effects occur. Both categories are also mentioned in research on side effects of psychotherapies (Conrad, 2010). Through coaching, as in the case of Ellen, reflection processes can be initiated and habitual patterns of behaviour and thinking can be challenged, which can at least temporarily reduce well-being. It is also normal that discussing problems and remembering negative

experiences can stimulate unpleasant feelings (Schermuly 2016; Schermuly et al., 2014). In the case of Ellen there is also the side effect that the coaching undesirably affects the work–life balance. The coaching sessions as well as the preparation and follow-up take up additional time.

However, new impulses from coaching can also put established relationship patterns of clients to relevant interaction partners to the test (see category 2 in Table 1). Consequences can be the deterioration of the relationship with the manager or employees, but also those outside work. While clients receive new impulses and develop further through coaching, this does not necessarily apply to the social systems in which they live and work. This can lead to conflicts that are experienced as unpleasant by the clients (Schermuly, 2016). Another important effect in the field of social integration is the development of a relationship of dependence between coach and client. Dealing with a relationship of dependence poses particular challenges for coach and client, as the client is threatened with the loss of his apparent support and the coach with the loss of a secure client (Schermuly, 2016; Tenzer, 2014).

An effect in performance can also be identified in Ellen (category 3). She was so preoccupied with coaching that she had difficulty concentrating during a subsequent appraisal interview. From the other categories (*evaluation of the work role*, *material losses* and *others*), no effects occur for Ellen thus far. All categories are described in detail at Schermuly, 2016.

If at least one adverse reaction occurred in a coaching session, the study participants were asked to provide information about the assumed causes. The coaches most often blamed the clients for the occurrence of a side effect. From the perspective of the coaches, the clients had too little awareness of the problem (in 22.7% of the coaching sessions with a side effect, this cause was perceived), false expectations (19.7%), were psychologically pre-disordered (18.1%), had no concrete coaching goal (16.4%) or had withheld important information from the coach (12.1%). False expectations could, for example, be a reason for the occurrence of side effects in Ellen. While Michael interprets coaching as process consulting and does not see himself as a problem solver who offers ready-made solutions and gives advice (Schiessler, 2010), Ellen expects exactly that from him.

On the organizational side, coaches more frequently perceived a poor transfer environment (16.4%), too little support from the organization for coaching (9.6%) and coaching forced by the organization (9.5%). In the category "*others*", *the reasons for* the occurrence were often too little time (24.1%) or financial resources (17.9%) and too little or too imprecise diagnostics (16.7%). Coaches perceived the insufficient collection of information about the client and his professional environment as the reason for the occurrence of side effects.

The percentage values for causes that the coaches attributed to themselves are lower compared to the other categories. These include the lack of accompanying supervision (10.7%), too little knowledge of the client's work/organization (10.6%), too little professional expertise (10.5%), as well as being overworked (9.4%). Coaches thus seem to blame their clients more than themselves for the occurrence of side effects. Whether this corresponds to reality or is rather due to an attribution

error must be shown by future research. Coaches also bear at least some responsibility for some of the causes on the client side. For example, managing the expectations and goals of coaching is a central part of the first coaching sessions (see, e.g., the coaching process models of Rauen, 2008; Whitmore, 2002), which the coach probably did not do enough in the case study. Further analyses regarding the causes show that there is a slight increase in coaching sessions in which certain topics such as burnout prevention or performance optimization were discussed. In the coaching sessions examined, more than six topics were dealt with in an average of eight sessions. It seems that working on many topics is a risk factor for the occurrence of side effects: There is a positive correlation between the number of subjects and the number of side effects ($\rho = 0.34$, $p < 0.05$).

Side Effects of Coaching for Coaches

The state of research on the topic of side effects of coaching for coaches was similarly rudimentary as for clients. Only Seiger and Künzli (2010) seem to have paid empirical attention to the topic in their market survey so far. As examples, the coaches mentioned burnout, loss of energy and too strong identification with the client (Seiger and Künzli, 2010, p. 14). Due to the limited state of research, an exploratory approach was chosen, based on the methodology described above.

Initially, structured interviews were conducted with 20 experienced coaches. The answers were transferred to an online questionnaire. This was answered in the next step by 104 coaches (age: $M = 51.4$ years, SD = 7.9; work experience: $M = 11.2$ years, SD = 6.9; working time with coaching $M = 36.1\%$, SD = 24.6; proportion of women = 56%). Side effects of coaching for coaches were presented to the coaches and they evaluated their occurrence in relation to the last completed coaching. In addition, on a five-point scale from *never* (0) to *very often* (4), they evaluated the extent to which they had already been confronted with the presented side effects during their career.

In 94.2% of the last coaching engagements at least one side effect occurred. On average, there were 5.9 effects per coaching. Side effects of coaching for coaches seem to be perceived three times as often as those for clients of coaches. However, it is important to note that these were two different samples. In terms of their career, 99% of the coaches were confronted with a side effect at least once. On average, they had already encountered 14.7 different effects in their career.

In Table 2, the side effects were categorized. Three categories are already known from Table 1: *Mental well-being*, *social integration* and *material losses*. Over 20% of coaches felt insecure, emotionally exhausted or stressed during their last coaching session. Often they are personally affected by a topic (44.2%), as Michael experienced in the case study. They are also regularly afraid of not fulfilling their role as coaches (40.4%).

The left percentage refers to the average appearance rate in the last coaching, the right one to the average appearance rate in the career.

Table 2 Side effects of coaching for coaches

1. Psychological health	2. Social integration	3. Unpleasant feelings towards client	4. Unpleasant behaviour towards coach	5. Disappointment with results	6. Material losses	7. Other
Being personally affected by coaching topics	Too little time for family and oneself	Feelings of guilt	Sexual advances	Disappointment that long-term effects could not be observed	Feeling of underpayment	Difficulties to be an effective communicator
(44.2%/78.8%)	(14.4%/44.2%)	(23.1%/60.6%)	(1.9%/14.4%)	(45.2%/77.9%)	(36.5%/70.2%)	(35.6%/62.5%)
Fear of not living up to the role of coach	Difficulty with opening in private life	Anger	Insults	Disappointment that client's problems could not be solved	Problems with payment	Difficulties to maintain personal boundaries
(40.4%/71.2%)	(10.6%/23.1%)	(20.2%/73.1%)	(1%/9.6%)	(36.5%/70.2%)	(6.7%/26%)	(17.3%/43.3%)
Uncertainty	Loneliness	Boredom	Stalking	Disappointment with ineffective coaching		
(38.5%/80.8%)	(7.7%/21.2%)	(12.5%/59.6%)	(1%/2.9%)	(23.1%/68.3%)		
Emotional exhaustion		Sexual attraction	Being threatened			
(26.9%/74%)		(6.7%/19.2%)	(1%/1.9%)			
Pressure because of high expectations		Being in love				
(29.8%/68.3%)		(3.8%/6.7%)				
Being scared to do something wrong						
(28.8%/71.2%)						
Stress						
(20.2%/61.5%)						

(continued)

Table 2 (continued)

1. Psychological health	2. Social integration	3. Unpleasant feelings towards client	4. Unpleasant behaviour towards coach	5. Disappointment with results	6. Material losses	7. Other
Too much responsibility (19.2%/55.8%)						
Burden due to extraordinary topic (15.4%/48.1%)						
Cannot switch off (15.4%/44.2%)						
Feeling overchallenged (10.4%/64.4%)						

In the area of social integration, the effects are generally less frequent. It is noticeable that in comparison with the client effects, no conflicts are triggered by the coaching in the social system of the coach. In the category of material losses there are other effects than those of the clients. More than a third felt underpaid in the last coaching engagement. This may reflect a highly competitive market, which attracts many new coaches every year.

Three further categories are specific to coaches: *result-related disappointment*, *unpleasant feelings towards the client* and *unpleasant behaviour of the client* towards the coach. The most common overall effect comes from the category of earnings-related disappointment. In 45.2% of the last coaching sessions, coaches were disappointed that they could not observe the long-term effects of their coaching. This does not necessarily mean that the coaches were dissatisfied with the success of their coaching. Relative to their last coaching engagement, this was 23.1% of the coaches. For example, Michael may have designed a successful coaching and Ellen is doing many things right in her new position because of the coaching. However, Michael is not informed of this anymore, as no *follow-up meeting is* held. As Table 2 shows, coaches also must deal with negative feelings towards their clients from time to time. Most often, coaches felt guilty towards their clients for not doing enough for them in their last coaching session (23.1%). They felt similarly often anger towards their clients (20.2%). They were much less likely to feel sexually attracted to their clients (6.7%) or to fall in love with them (3.8%). The coaches interviewed were only very rarely exposed to unpleasant behaviour on the part of the clients. Sexual advances occur most frequently. While almost 40% of psychotherapists have been stalked at one time or another (Krammer et al., 2007), this applies to only 2.9% of coaches.

Like the client effects, the side effects of the coaches tend to be perceived with rather low to medium intensity. In the presented study, established scales were used to validate the side effects. Medium and high correlations were found between the number of side effects in the last coaching engagement and the emotional exhaustion of the coaches in the last month ($\rho = 0.57, p < 0.01$), the stress experience in the last month ($\rho = 0.42, p < 0.01$) and their psychological empowerment ($\rho = -0.50, p < 0.01$). Psychological empowerment is composed of the four facets of competence, significance, self-determination, and impact experience during work (Spreitzer, 1995). The experience of competence and impact was particularly strongly associated with the number of side effects. The more side effects occurred in the last coaching, the less competent and less impactful the coaches felt in their profession.

Causes for side effects of coaching for coaches were qualitatively determined and evaluated by Schermuly and Bohnhardt (2014). Here the coaches were most often seen as responsible for the perceived causes. These include transfer effects, lack of supervision, lack of competence and self-management skills and lack of experience. The second most common cause was that relating to the organization. These were, e.g., wrong expectations of the organization towards the coaching, obstructions of the coaching process by the organization, lack of transfer guarantee, forced coaching as well as unclear conditions in the organization. But also causes on the side of the

clients were reported. These include false expectations, motivational problems, lack of problem awareness, dependence and lack of autonomy of the client.

Conclusion

The empirically determined positive effects of coaching were recently summarized in a meta-analysis (Theeboom et al., 2014). Besides *main effects,* side effects seem to be regular companions of coaching processes. Side effects occur frequently, but with low intensity and rather short duration. Serious side effects are rare. These are positive results for the coaching profession. Particular attention should be paid to the result that coaches perceive side effects significantly more often in themselves than in their clients. How important the topic seems to be for coaches is shown by international blogs where the results of the presented study are discussed. Here, for example, a coach reports how relieved he is that he is not alone with his feelings: "Until now, when working independently and in isolation, I sometimes believe that feelings such as the ones above only relate to me ... But in a way I feel reassured that it is not just me, and that these views are shared by others, and so it is something about the nature of the role of a coach" (Challenging Coaching, 2014).

Starting points for the prevention and management of side effects can be the causes identified in the studies. It seems to be particularly important to address dual causes (Schermuly and Bohnhardt, 2014), i.e. those causes that have an impact on the development of side effects for both clients and coaches. These include, for example, lack of supervision and insufficient expertise on the part of coaches, false expectations, and insufficient problem awareness on the part of clients, and a lack of transfer security. The coaching associations "actively try to educate about this in order to sensitize coaches to side effects" (Tenzer, 2014, p. 135). This education should be firmly anchored in the training and further training courses for coaching.

At the same time, the research presented is not free of limitations. Initially, the effects and causes are merely the perceptions of coaches, which were collected in a cross-sectional design. After the exploratory phase, more controlled study designs should now be chosen, which also have a longitudinal character. Only in this way can causal statements be made, and it can be checked whether side effects remain negative in the long term.

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Stress and Stress Management in Coaching

Siegfried Greif and Stephen Palmer

Stress as the Other Side of the Coin During High Performances

Case Study: An Executive Wants to Get off the Hamster Wheel

The successful young head of the legal and compliance department of an international company came into coaching with the following wish. He wished to do something about his increasing stress at work. He wanted to get off the hamster wheel, which according to his view turned faster and faster. It was like a vicious circle: The more and faster he processed requests from the company concerning compliance rules and legal questions, the more questions he received and the more work he had to do, the more requests he received and the more the workload increased. He had become a father 6 months ago and no longer wanted to spend every weekend at home with work that has not been completed. He longed for more time with his wife and daughter.

The first thing we did in coaching was to analyze his stress situation. This analysis was used to understand the system explaining the increase of the workload and develop solutions for breaking the vicious circle and improving stress management. The solution that he preferred was not to answer most inquiries immediately, but to first demand a more precise clarification of the request through a set of standard questions. Short breathing exercises were supplemented with biofeedback during working hours in order to bring more composure into everyday working life. The

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implementation of his plans in everyday working life was initially supported by telephone coachings and then by SMS. After 8 weeks, the very self-regulated and reflective lawyer managed to break the vicious increase of the workload and bring more composure into his daily work. Only in exceptional situations did he work at home. He was particularly happy about the time with his daughter. To his surprise, he even managed to improve the quality of his services for the company.

The following describes the theoretical and methodological foundations that can be used to reduce stressors and improve stress management.

What Is Stress?

In the early days of stress research, there were intense debates on the question of what is meant by stress. Selye (1950), who saw himself as a discoverer of the phenomenon, contributed to the controversies. By "stress" he understood an "unspecific reaction of the body to every demand made of it" (ibid., p. 58). According to Selye, the "stress reaction" by no means only follows negative stimuli ("distress"), but also strong positive stimuli ("eustress"). Today, hardly no researcher would assume that joyful events elicit reactions similar to those following negative stress events. As in everyday language, stress emotions are regarded as negative or aversive experiences (Semmer et al., 2005, p. 4 ff.).

Selye focused in his model, primarily on physiological reactions. In the 1960s, Lazarus (1966) discovered that the stress response is influenced by how the person subjectively evaluates the situation. For example, one person can view loud techno music as stressful noise, another as stimulating music. Depending on this "primary appraisal," different physiological and psychological reactions are caused. Stress reactions occur only, if the situation is aversive for the person. According to Lazarus, this first appraisal is accompanied by a "secondary appraisal." Here the coping competences or resources for coping with the stress situation are taken into account. For example, one person may evaluate time pressure at the workplace as stressful, while another, who knows that she can complete the tasks faster than others, may regard it positively as a challenge.

According to the transactional stress model of Lazarus (1966), stress is the result of an interaction or transaction between the situation and subsequent appraisals of the situation by the person. According to a definition further developed on the basis of Lazarus, stress can be more precisely narrowed down by the following characteristics (adapted Greif 1991, p. 13):

- The persons experience the situation as a subjectively intense aversive state of tension, that is temporally close (or has already occurred) and lasts a long time.
- The persons fear that they be unable to control it completely, although the avoidance of it is subjectively important.

These characteristics can be jointly analyzed through questions in the coaching session. The department head in the opening case experienced it as an uneasy state of

tension, for example, when he received further requests by e-mail immediately after his quick processing of the first request, which involved additional work. This gave him the feeling that his work was constantly expanding and could never be completed.

Stressors

Characteristics or situations that elicit stress can differ between individuals (Semmer & Meier 2009). If people react differently to the same situation, such as time pressure, it does not follow at all that stressors are merely "subjective" individual perceptions. Multimethod analyses using self-report stress measures of the same job and two independent workers show that it is possible to combine them in a common structural equation model and to measure the "shared job strain" (Semmer et al., 1996).

There are well-established standardized scales for measuring stressors. They can be assessed by questionnaire or by trained observers (Heinrichs and Stächele 2015; Irmer et al. 2019; Semmer et al. 1996). The office of the German National Conference on Occupational Safety and Health (Nationale Arbeitsschutzkonferenz, 2015) lists the following general stressors:

- High time pressure
- Too high qualification requirements
- Problems in communication and cooperation
- Insufficient information
- Low decision latitude
- Action interruptions
- Organizational and workflow problems
- Environmental stressors (noise, heat, draught, etc.)
- Too much variability of tasks
- Monotony
- Uncertainty and high responsibility
- Strong emotional involvement
- Insecurity
- Working hours too long
- Accident risks

According to a representative survey of over 20,000 German workers conducted by the Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training and the Federal Institute for Employment and Occupational Medicine (Lohmann-Haislah, 2012), the most frequently cited pressures or stressors are high achievement-pressure, work interruptions, and excessive working speed. The simultaneous execution of several tasks (multitasking) is also perceived by many as straining.

Recent Models of Stress Causes, Resources, and Stress Consequences

Recent stress models take into account the external resources that help the person in the organizational environment to cope with demands and stressors, as well as individual resources or stress coping skills and stress management skills.

The now highly regarded resource conservation theory of Hobfoll (1989) focuses on the resources that we need or can lose to cope with the stress situation in critical life events (e.g., examinations, changes or loss of work, separation from important persons, etc.). It is stressful when we fear losing valuable resources that we need for coping. Those who have built up more resources are better prepared for coping with stress situations. Not only individual potentials are regarded as useful resources, but also social support and resources such as money, enough time, or job security. A central assumption is that we attempt to protect ourselves from the loss of our resources and have a go at building new ones. According to the theory, losses make people vulnerable. A longitudinal study by Weinberg (2016) comparing samples of managers receiving coaching to a control group refers to the model. Results show that strain rose over time in the control but not in the manager groups. In addition, a significant relationship was found between the number of coaching sessions and reduced symptoms of strain.

The JDC-S model by Karasek and Theorell (1990) expects negative psychological and physiological stress consequences especially when (1) job demands (especially workload) are very high, (2) job control (freedom in deciding how to meet demands or how to perform tasks) is low, and in (3) work place social support (by colleagues and superiors at the workplace) is weak. Longitudinal studies show that the consequences are psychosomatic complaints, sleep disorders, and health impairments, in particular cardiovascular diseases or high blood pressure (Shirom et al., 2009).

The importance of resources is also central to the Job Demands Resource model (JD-R) of Bakker and Demerouti (2014). According to this theory, people strive to maintain or expand their personal and situational resources when accomplishing tasks. The consequences of high job demands and stress strain can be reduced or "buffered" by the person's resources. If, on the other hand, their resources decrease after prolonged periods of stress or if they are feared not to be sufficient to cope with the demands, this has a negative influence on their well-being.

The AAA model of Mackey and Perrewé (2014) is based on Lazarus and integrates recent research findings and variables from the above models with additions of self-regulatory abilities. It takes into account individual differences in the following areas:

- *Appraisal of the situation* (emotional response):
  - Perceived as threatening or
  - challenging.

- *Attributions* (subjective assessments of individuals causal outcomes of the demands):

  – If a person sees the cause of their overtime in an arbitrary decision by their supervisor, they react with anger or
  – if, on the other hand, the causes are attributed to too little personal effort, feelings of guilt can arise.

- *Adaptation* of the person (learning from previous stress experiences how to cope with the situation):

  – Improving the management of the stress situation and self-regulation through learning processes, better use of available resources, and improvement of well-being or
  – increase of negative assessments and impairment of well-being.

According to the AAA model self-regulation is an important mechanism for coping behavior. It can be strengthened like a muscle through repeated exercise.

The stress models mentioned above take into account both psychological and physical health impairments. The theories share the assumption that resources have a strong (mediating) positive influence. This expands possible approaches for improvement in the practice of coaching. Where it is impossible to reduce the stressors, improvements can be achieved by strengthening resources such as decision latitude or social support. In addition, the AAA model points out that it is often psycho-hygienically more beneficial for the person than the frequent complaining about time pressure or other stressors if he or she recognizes his or her own co-causation and trains self-regulation.

Physiological Measures, Unwinding and Detachment

In the stress situation, the so-called stress hormone adrenaline is released as an immediate physiological stress reaction, while cortisol is emitted after a longer period of stress. In research today cortisol is mostly measured using saliva samples (morning and evening, cf. Miller et al. 2016) or taking the measurements from hair samples. Because the hair grows about 1 cm per month, it is possible to measure cortisol levels over a period of several months and use this as a longitudinal measurement (Stalder et al., 2012).

It takes time for the body to reduce the hormone level again. The recovery after a stressful situation to physiological "rest or normal values" is called unwinding or down winding (Frankenhaeuser and Johansson 1986). Already after 6 months of intense occupational stress, these necessary periods for self-calming are prolonged.

It is psychologically important to mentally distance oneself from work and work stress after a stressful day. This is called detachment. The statement "I had a nice evening after work!" refers to a successful detachment. Sonnentag et al. (2008) have

shown relationships between detachment and relaxation as well as positive activity in the evening and sleep quality in the following night using daily protocols.

Re-structuring of Stress-Inducing Conditions Versus Behavior Modification in Stress Management

Ideally, two types of approaches to stress reduction can be distinguished: re-structuring of the stress-inducing conditions and behavior modification. Structural interventions refer to changes in the strength of stressors or the context conditions that cause them, as well as strengthening external resources such as decision latitude at work or social support. For experts in this field, the structural changes are regarded as fundamental (cf. Bamberg et al., 2011), because only through them is it possible to change the fundamental external roots sustainably. If, on the other hand, the changes refer to individual appraisal or coping competences of the individuals or to relaxation techniques used by the person in and after the stress situation, these are classified as a behavior modification.

Re-structuring of Stress-Inducing Conditions—Stressors and External Resources

It is often difficult to reduce the strength of external stressors. Spontaneously many even think that there is virtually no way to reduce stressors such as time pressure. Time pressure is by no means set arbitrarily by the company, but arises in competition with other companies under pressure from customers to get the desired services as quickly as possible. If you deliver more slowly than other companies, you lose customers. In coaching, it is easier to communicate improvements by enhancing external resources, e.g. by making better use of or extending decision latitude at work in order to buffer the time pressure or at least temporarily reduce it through more quiet work phases. In the case of interventions to ameliorate stress at the workplace, it is useful to ask colleagues and line managers for support. This also provides the external resource of social support, which is generally an effective buffer against stress, according to the theories and practical experience listed above.

An improvement of stress-related working conditions can be seen from a company perspective as an economic investment to reduce absence costs. White et al. (2013) have evaluated the results of 2467 individual studies and found that absence from work due to illness is high when two or more of the following risk factors occur at work: Work stress due to time pressure, high psychological demands, limited decision latitude at work, and lack of social support. Persistent "stress above the limit" can lead to burnout (see *Burnout* in this handbook), resulting in very long absenteeism.

Behavior Modification: Stress Management, Relaxation, and Self-Calming

A search with Google for the keyword "stress management" results in more than 28.5 million entries (on 3/11/20). It offers methods and programs, specialist literature, seminars and coaching or training for future experts. The main focus is on relaxation techniques, as well as recommendations for changing one's own behavior or attitudes. Almost all can be classified as behavior modification, because they refer to individual changes of thoughts, emotions, or actions and not to working conditions.

Stress is associated with an extraordinarily wide variety of life demands. Several contributions in this handbook provide cross-references and methods for behavior modification. A broad introduction to stress management based on cognitive behavioral methods can be found in the self-help book by Palmer and Cooper (2013). It includes short questionnaires from stress research on critical life events and coping styles or superseding irrational stress-inducing beliefs according to Ellis' Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy (REBT) (Ellis et al., 1997; Ellis 2007) and other methods.

As mentioned above in the AAA model, there are many additional methods worth mentioning that promote learning for better coping with stressors, such as training on simulators or concentration exercises that reduce errors at work. However, this kind of exercises is more suitable for the training field and can hardly be used in coaching. In the following only three method groups are covered, which are very common in coaching. The first group is time management for improving self and stress management. The second describes an individualized cognitive behavioral approach combined with REBT. The third group deals with methods for relaxation and self-calming as well as mindfulness exercises.

Stress Management by Time Management

Countless self-help books have been published about time management. The English classic was written by Mackenzie (1972), the German counterpart is Seiwert (2014). Time management principles are based on methods for analyzing how to list and prioritize tasks by importance and urgency, how to identify and eliminate time wasting, and how to delegate tasks to others. A review of the state of research on the application of these principles shows, however, that they are by no means as useful as their protagonists promise (Claessens et al., 2007). The main effect is at least a better time control.

Practical experiences from seminars on time and self-management show that the general time management principles are rarely applicable unchanged in all cases. Often very specific solutions have to be found that fit the organizational context as well as the preferences and habits of the individual. This is possible in individual coaching. For example, it turned out in the case example described at the beginning

among other things that the head of the legal and compliance department received most of his working tasks in the form of inquiries by e-mail. In order to answer them as efficiently as possible, he had processed them as immediately as possible. However, his quick answers by e-mail had been immediately backed up by clarifications and many additional further questions. In order to interrupt this increase in online dialogs with more and more additional questions, he tried out delaying the majority of the answers by a few hours or sending them later even when he had finished the answer—if necessary—in addition demanding to define the inquiry question more precisely. The effect, as hoped, stopped the spirals of a rising number of additional questioning and resulted in a clarification of the inquiry questions. Unexpectedly for him, the department head's reputation increased rather than decreased, although his answers did not succeed as quickly as before. This encouraged him to work with his team to further perfect time management in e-mail processing and to encourage them to formulate more precise prompts to improve the quality of responses.

Presumably, the consistent implementation of new rules for time management only works for a few, self-directed, and disciplined people. In order to achieve high implementation rates, it is therefore advisable in coaching to accompany the implementation, as in the initial example, by telephone or SMS (see *Motivation, Will and Implementation* in this handbook) or to use precise behavior-oriented self-management strategies based on scientific findings and research on behavior modification and psychotherapy (see *Behavior Modification* in this handbook).

Multimodal Assessment and Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy

Palmer and Dryden (1995) have adapted a multimodal approach to the field of stress management. In this approach, the individual requirements of the perceived strain are determined across seven discrete but interactive modalities: behaviors, affective processes, sensations, images, cognitions, interpersonal relationships, and biological functions (including drugs). This is known by the acronym, BASIC I.D. Jenkins and Palmer (2003) demonstrated in a case study how this approach can be customized effectively, considering the complex and special individual requirements. The case example is a staff nurse, working in a large, acute, general hospital with severe chronic stress at work. In addition to cognitive behavioral technique, they used Ellis' Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy (REBT) approach to modify her irrational stress-inducing beliefs (Ellis et al., 1997; Ellis, 2007). The results show improvements in nearly all mental health scales (depression, somatic symptoms, anxiety, emotional exhaustion, and job stress).

Relaxation and Self-Calming Techniques

Relaxation is a "vital principle" (Hamm 2009). Various schools and associations offer sophisticated methods for relaxation, meditation, or self-calming: Progressive

muscle relaxation by Jacobson (1925), autogenic training by Schultz (1928/1979), relaxation suggestions with hypnotherapeutic methods (Palmer, 2017), yoga, mindfulness exercises (see *Mindfulness* in this handbook), biofeedback or other methods. If you browse the Internet for an overview of "coaching and stress management," you will find all of these methods, with meditative methods and mindfulness exercises being mentioned particularly frequently.

Scientific studies show that the different methods generate comparable physiological and psychological relaxation reactions and that the dispute about which method is "right" basically is outdated (Hamm 2009). However, if the spiritual Buddhist foundations are adhered to, yoga or mindfulness exercises are by no means primarily used for relaxation, but for self-discovery or serenity. The verifiable relaxation is only a side effect.

Breathing Exercises with HRV Biofeedback

Autonomous neuro-vegetative processes are hardly consciously perceptible and controllable. However, all measurable body signals can be fed back to the person with biofeedback (e.g., electrodermal activity as a physiological measure of arousal) or neurofeedback (e.g., alpha waves in the EEG as a measure of relaxation). This enables the person to learn to influence them. These techniques are applicable in the non-medical field as well (Kowalski, 2016).

It is technically easy to perform breathing exercises with biofeedback of heart rate variability (HRV). HRV is an important basal health parameter in modern cardiology. It measures the flexible adjustment of the heartbeat to changing requirements and is regulated by the autonomous nervous system (Hottenrott et al., 2014). The healthy heart harmoniously accelerates the heartbeat during inhalation and slows it down again slightly while exhaling. Under stress, these ascending and descending curves accelerate and become flatter.

With small pulse meters (e.g., in a wristband) and suitable software for a laptop or smartphone, HRV can be computed from the heartbeat to heartbeat intervals. Most people are able to improve their HRV levels through breathing exercises and relaxation under expert guidance. To improve and stabilize, daily exercises of 3–5 minutes are sufficient.

The following application example from coaching shows which benefits can be achieved through HRV biofeedback. The 60-year-old client, manager, and owner of a medium-sized company, came into coaching on the advice of his cardiologist. The cardiologist recommended him a coaching for stress management, because he thought that his high blood pressure should not be treated only by medication.

Following analyses of the stress situation, coaching initially focused on starting points for the economic stabilization of the company, which had to struggle to survive in a difficult market. In addition, daily physical activities, sleep hygiene counseling by an expert (see *burnout* in this handbook), and daily breathing exercises with HRV biofeedback were added for behavior modification to cope with the stress situation and a better recovery. He had tried yoga and autogenic training
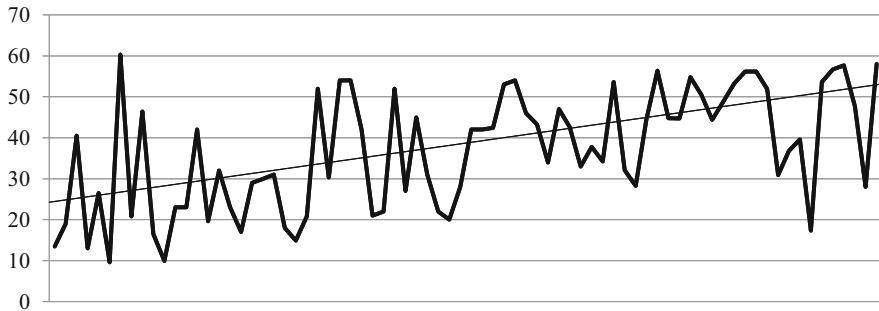
Fig. 1 Mean HRV-measures (76 biofeedback exercises March to December, 2010 6–8 a.m.)

before without noticeable success. Already during the first biofeedback exercises in coaching, he clearly felt that through biofeedback he was able to better intensify his abdominal breathing and relaxation. The curve in Fig. 1 shows the HRV mean values which he sent by e-mail over a period of about 8 months after his very consistent 3-minute exercises (unfortunately not completely due to measurement problems). His blood pressure measurements before and after the biofeedback exercise showed an average reduction in systolic and diastolic blood pressure of 3–5 mmHg.

With 76 measured values, it is possible to statistically analyze this single case (Greif 2011). The starting value of the HRV parameter was 13.5, improved slightly to 23.0 in April–May 2010, and leveled off later in November–December to 45.5 with an increasing trend. A comparison of the differences between the first and last 6 values yields a significant t value of 2.24 with $p < 0.02$ and a strong effect ($d = 1.29$). As the fluctuations in the curve show, there are always single decreasing values. The decreased values from November can be explained by an influenza infection. The strong decline near at the end resulted after a severe conflict in the family.

The opportunity of evaluating coachings with longer time series of physiological biofeedback measurements not only makes biofeedback measurements interesting for science, but also for managers who appreciate measurable results (Greif, 2011).

Zwan et al. (2015) conducted one of the few studies comparing the effectiveness of different methods with randomization of the groups. They compared the reduction of stress symptoms through regular exercise, mindfulness exercises, and HRV biofeedback. For each of the three methods, which were followed for about 5 months, medium to strong effects were achieved in reducing the values of a stress scale. However, the differences between the methods were not significant. Once again it is shown that comparable effects can be achieved with different techniques, but only for those who implement them in a controlled manner over several months (the dropout was almost 50%).

COVID-19 Pandemic

At the start of the 2020s, the COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant negative impact upon physical health and mental well-being internationally. Rising stress, anxiety, and depression levels are not surprising as people are having to adjust to what has been described as a "new normal," in addition to coping with the loss of friends, colleagues, and family members to COVID-19. Coaches are having to use virtual platforms such as Skype and Zoom much more than previously to undertake coaching meetings. Coaches have started to consider how to assist clients adapt to change and transition coaching and counseling models such as INSIGHT have been implemented (see Palmer et al., 2020; Panchal et al., 2020).

Outlook

Today, positive effects can be achieved with popular behavior-oriented coaching methods such as mindfulness exercises or individually adapted time and stress management. However, the effects are often weak. So far there is insufficient evidence that would allow coaches to promise sustainable improvements after a couple of coaching sessions. Apparently, these require implementation support over a longer period of time before they become effective. Individual stress management or relaxation exercises have to be updated and refreshed at regular intervals. Reflection and improvement of one's own stress and self-management are probably a life task that can never be completed completely.

More sustainable, presumably, will be re-structuring of stress-inducing conditions and improvement of the external resources. Coaching services aiming at individual coping skills are ideally an integral part of comprehensive occupational health management (Bamberg et al. 2011). In coaching, however, clients not only address occupational stressors and the attitudes and beliefs they hold, but also the situation in the family and leisure time as well as the entire work-life balance. The metaphor of an ideal balance, however, requires a reconceptualization. Instead of the idea of a "balance" we could take into account recent findings from research on work and family (Bataille, 2016). Life outside the workplace is by no means without stress and pressure. Therefore there may be hardly much to balance work stress. Instead of looking for a balance, it would be more appropriate to design the client's personal comprehensive development plan of their work and private life (depending on personality, phase of life, and social context) and design "harmonious activities" in all areas of life. Stress management coaching is not limited to just one area. It includes a stress and recovery during and after work, detachment, modification of stress-inducing cognitions, coping with transitions, down winding, relaxation and physical activity, and healthy sleep or life, more mindfulness and the client's longing for times of calmness and composure in a hectic world.

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Success Factors in the Coaching Process

Peter Behrendt and Siegfried Greif

Introduction

Cathy, a project manager, is welcomed by her coach, John, with a handshake. Cathy is engaging in her first coaching session, which forms part of a leadership development program, with the goal of enhancing her management of development projects. As he comes in, John asks: "*How are you?*" As he does so, he takes out his documents and sorts them. Cathy replies: "*Very good! We had a very successful milestone last week. There have been some really positive developments in the last few weeks.*" John with a brief eye contact from the corner of his eye while sorting the documents: "*Oh! I'm really happy about that." A* short time later the coaching discussion begins. John briefly reminds her of the process and asks Cathy about her concerns.

The example described is not untypical. It was recorded on video (with changed names) as part of our research. Although John is a very successful coach, even before the coaching really started, he missed three chances to connect with Cathy at the start of the session. In this chapter we will take a closer look at these three opportunities and the associated success factors and provide practical suggestions on how they can be used in our coaching. We will present three models as ways to enhance success factors in coaching. Finally, it will be discussed how insights into these factors can be used for the professional training, in coach education and to improve effectiveness.

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Success Factors in the Coaching Process

The results of coaching can be extremely diverse. The Appraisal of whether coaching can be considered a *success* is a social construction. Subjective evaluations by clients, managers, and coaches of the success, or degree of achievement, of the coaching goals are hardly indisputable even in scientific effectiveness studies. They could be additionally supported by objectifiable observations and evaluations of economic results (Greif, 2017). It can be assumed that the coaching results that the clients and coaches assess as *successful* are co-created in complex interaction processes (see Chapter: Quality of the Coaching Service). Despite this diversity, there are behavioral patterns of coaches who can predict the success of the coaching that the client will ultimately assess. They are referred to as *general success factors* (synonymously also called effectiveness factors). An example of such a factor is an *empathetic coaching relationship*. De Haan et al. (2016) have found in a sample of 1895 coaches and 1895 clients that coaching success depends on a good *working alliance* (see Chapter: Coaching Relationship). However, these results are based on subjective assessments of the respondents. In the following, success factors are described which are based on behavioral observations through video recordings which were used to predict success after the coaching session.

In addition to general success factors, a distinction can be made between specific behavioral characteristics that have only been realized in individual coaching sessions. In order to capture them, single-case analyses are required, e.g. analyses of the transcripts of individual coaching sessions using linguistic methods or interpretative theoretical reconstructions of interaction behavior (Greif & Schubert, 2015). The following presentation focuses on general success factors and begins with the factors in the behavior of the coaches.

Three Current Success Factor Models

So far, there are only a few scientific studies that investigate observable behavior of coaches and its relation to success (Behrendt, 2012; Greif et al., 2012; Ianiro et al., 2013). They all prove that it is possible to predict various success criteria in coaching based on observable success factors in the behavior of coaches.

There are currently three comprehensive models with general success factors for the observable behavior of coaches in coaching: (1) the Bernese success factors according to Grawe and colleagues and two transferences to coaching, (2) the Freiburger success factor model (Behrendt, 2012), and (3) the success factors for result-oriented coaching (Greif et al., 2012).

The Bernese Success Factors

Klaus Grawe, University of Berne, reviewed all at that time existing psychotherapeutic effectiveness studies and evaluated them in a summary meta-analysis (Grawe et al., 1994). Based on the results of this meta-analysis, Grawe had to explain the paradox why completely different schools of therapy show very similar outcomes. To this end, he created the concept of four general success factors which explain the enhancement of humans, which can be stimulated by very different therapeutic approaches:

1. Resource activation, including a positive therapeutic relationship,
2. Problem actualization (direct and holistic experience of the problems to be solved and learning experiences that are anchored in implicit memory),
3. Motivational clarification (including clarification of conflicting goals and unconscious wishes),
4. Coping (development of new behavioral competencies).

The research group at the University of Bern (Swiss) has been engaged in research and training on resource activation in the behavior of therapists (Flückiger et al., 2010). The Berne effect factors are scientifically sound, confirmed by studies and are still a recognized model today. They are transferable to coaching.

Freiburg Success Factor Coaching

The model of the Freiburg Success Factor Coaching is based on the Bernese success factors and has transferred them for the first time to the coaching context (Behrendt, 2004, 2012). Through a behavior-oriented study, the Freiburg research group was able to prove that the Bernese success factors also significantly predict success in the coaching context (Behrendt, 2006). Further development addressed shortcomings of the Bernese factors:

1. The success factor of *problem actualization* is renamed *memorable experiences* and thus limited to the theoretically and empirically more significant aspect of the holistic experience of problem actualization. In coaching, a narrow problem focus of coaches seems to reduce success and should therefore be used sparingly (Behrendt, 2006).
2. The high importance of the success factor *resource activation* and the coaching relationship (Regli et al., 2000) is taken into account by dividing Grawe's one success factor into three more detailed success factors: (i) *Providing process guidance, (ii) cooperative support, and (iii) activating resources.*
3. The significance of the two other impact factors is clarified by an impact-oriented renaming. In addition, factor analyses had shown that the Berne effect factor *motivational clarification* actually represents two separate aspects, namely a clarification-oriented factor, which leads to greater understanding, and a motivational factor, which leads to clear and stronger motivation. This results in the
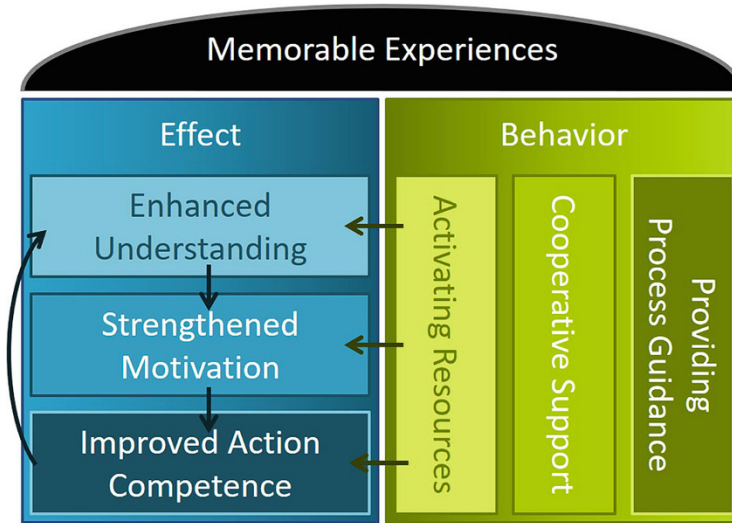
Fig. 1 Freiburg success factors in coaching

following four success factors: (i) *enhanced understanding, (ii) strengthened motivation, (iii) improved action competence,* and (iv) *memorable experiences.*

Figure 1 shows the resulting model. Coaching experts differ from coaching beginners in terms of behavior in providing clearer process guidance, more cooperative support, and greater activation of resources (Tertocha, 2015). These behaviors then lead to an enhanced understanding, strengthened motivation, improved action competence, and more memorable experiences for the client (Behrendt, 2006). These four direct effects in turn are a proven prerequisite for a more successful implementation in everyday life and thus for a higher achievement of the client's goals (Behrendt, 2006).

Success Factors for Result-Oriented Coaching

Similar to the Freiburg factors, the success factors for result-oriented coaching are a revision of the Berne factors. They aimed to solve the overlap problems mentioned above. The model attempts to establish closer links to application-oriented basic psychological research (Greif, 2008; Greif et al., 2012):

1. *Appreciation and emotional support of the client by the coach*
   The factor is based on the classic basic variable of *empathetic understanding and emotional warmth* according to Rogers (1972). It is expected that this promotes a positive coaching relationship.
2. *Affect activation and calibration*

The coach can specifically encourage clients to visualize positive or negative feelings that they have experienced in situations that are important to them. As with Grawe's factor, it is assumed that problem updating can be achieved with different methods and effects.

3. *Promotion of result-oriented situation or problem analyses*

By asking questions, the coach encourages the client to describe and analyze problem situations. This analysis can refer to the expectations and behavior of other individuals or groups and to social systems (organizational structures and processes, market situation, etc.). Positive result-oriented reflections are encouraged when the coach guides the client to reflect on starting points for desirable future changes.

4. *Promotion of result-oriented self-reflection*

In contrast to situation analysis, self-reflection refers to conscious reflection of the client about himself/herself or his/her personal values and needs, characteristics, strengths, and weaknesses, individual behavior and personal development opportunities or ideal self-concept. To enable positive effects, coaches should stimulate positive result-oriented self-reflection, e.g. new insights, or action plans (see Chapter: Self-reflection in Coaching).

5. *Clarification of goals*

In various coaching concepts, clarifying the client's goals is one of the most important tasks in the coaching process. Cognitive-behavioral coaching concepts emphasize that goals should be specific, measurable, accepted, realistic, and time-structured so that they can motivate and be implemented However, it is not always possible or useful to insist on precision (see Chapter: Goals in Coaching).

6. *Resource activation*

The factor refers to the principle of helping people to help themselves, as mentioned above by Grawe and in the Freiburg model of success factors. This will be discussed in more detail below.

7. *Implementation support*

In Grawe's model, *coping is* listed as an effectiveness factor. According to Gassmann and Grawe (2006), this includes (i) promoting the development of solutions and action-oriented coping with the problem and (ii) the transfer of concrete measures into practice as well as (iii) supporting the client in achieving the objectives. An effective method of intervention here is to accompany all implementation attempts through the so-called shadowing (face-to-face as in sports coaching, by telephone after each implementation, or via WhatsApp) until the implementation is successful (Greif, 2013).

For a detailed description of the behavioral characteristics of the seven factors and the application to the evaluation of a transcribed coaching case as an example we refer to Greif (2015).

The seven factors can be related to each other. As Fig. 2 shows, the factor *appreciation and emotional support* are considered the basis for all other factors. *Result-oriented problem analysis* and *self-reflection, on the* other hand, can be placed as overarching factors on a metacognitive level. They can be reflexively
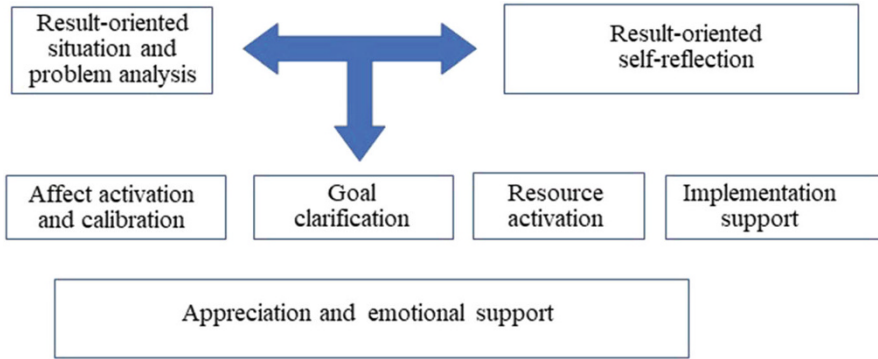
Fig. 2 Effective factors for result-oriented coaching

Table 1 Similarities and differences between the success factor models

	Bernese success factors	Freiburg Success Factors Coaching	Success factors of Result-oriented Coaching
Relationship- and resource-oriented success factors	Therapy/coaching relationship and resource activation	Providing process guidance	
		Cooperative support	Appreciation and emotional support
		Activating resources	Resource activation
Experience-oriented success factors	Problem actualization	Memorable experiences	Affect activation and calibration
Reflection- and action-oriented success factors	Motivational clarification	Enhanced understanding	Result oriented self-reflection
			Result oriented situation analysis
		Strengthened motivation	Goal clarification
	Coping	Improved action competence	Implementation support

related to all other factors. For example, it is recommended the coach undertakes a situation analysis and self-reflection and considers external and internal resources (see Chapter: Self-reflection in Coaching).

Comparison of the Success Factor Models

There are similarities and differences between the three success factor models that are shown in Table 1.

The activation of resources is seen in all models equally as a particularly effective success factor. It is therefore described in more detail below. In the Freiburg model, the coaching relationship is formed by aspects of process guidance, cooperative support, and partial aspects of resource activation. In the third model, on the other hand, it is assumed that a good coaching relationship can be attributed primarily to the basic variable of *appreciation and emotional support.* It is expected that this factor contributes to each of the other factors. In the second model, the importance of *process guidance* and *cooperative support* is particularly emphasized. Process guidance is not considered in the third model. We will discuss these differences below.

The Coaching Relationship: Process Guidance and Appreciative, Cooperative Support

According to the study by De Haan and Mannhardt (2013), a good coaching relationship is a fundamental success factor (see Chapter: Coaching Relationship). The coach and client contribute to this relationship with mutual appreciation and trust. But which concrete behavior of the coach contributes to a good coaching relationship?

In the Freiburg model, the following general behavioral characteristics of the coach are listed:

1. *Clear process guidance*: The coach should lead the coaching process in a clear and competent manner to provide orientation, security, and trust in the coaching.
2. *Appreciative, cooperative support of the client*: following the client in the contents and impulses, needs and ideas with appreciation and empathy.
3. *Activation of resources*
4. *The art of a successful coaching relationship*: This lies in an interplay of (i) leading and (ii) following, which is optimal for the progress of the coaching.

For competent process guidance, the model of the Freiburg success factors refers to the following behavioral patterns:

- Explain coaching procedures and convey how they can help the client to achieve the desired goal.
- Structure the coaching process so that the common thread is understood, is maintained, and what has already been achieved is made clear.
- Show personal security and competence, so that the client feels well attended and safely accompanied.

For appreciative, cooperative accompaniment, the model of result-oriented coaching refers to the factor of *appreciation and emotional support* as a general basis. In the manual on behavioral observation (Schmidt and Thamm, 2008), the following behavioral characteristics are referred to, among others:

- Verbal alignment: e.g. Small talk, creating a pleasant and warm atmosphere, *"How are you today?"*
- Show a positive attitude: e.g.: *"It is nice that you ...."*
- Express interest in the client's issues. *"How did your plan work?"*
- Appreciation through approving words (e.g.: *"This is an important issue that you have raised... This is an impressive achievement!"*)
- Non-verbal: facing posture, friendly eye contact, affirmative facial expressions (e.g., nodding) and verbal attentions (e.g.: *"Mmhhh"*).

In Cathy's opening example, the coach, John, missed three chances:

1. John was not ready to start coaching in the moment the client arrived. He thus seemed unprepared. Apparently, the coaching relationship was positive enough through the previous conversations, so that Cathy nevertheless opened directly with a message that was emotionally important to her and relevant for the coaching; the great progress of her team towards her coaching goals.
2. Although Cathy made an important announcement, John was not fully present and missed the significance of Cathy's statement. He only superficially responded and showed no appreciation.
3. John missed the chance to use this communication to strengthen Cathy's self-confidence and to explore how this success had been achieved, what Cathy had contributed to it, and how she could learn from it for the future to repeat corresponding successes.

The small example based on a real case shows that appreciation and competent process guidance are important from the very first minute and can contribute to *cooperative support* and *resource activation* that is open to the client's concerns.

Resource Activation

In psychotherapy, resource activation is regarded as the behavior of therapists that is most relevant for success (Flückiger et al., 2008). In coaching, too, clients could best achieve their coaching goals if the coach helps the client to activate their wider resources (Behrendt, 2006). The activation of resources for coping with current challenges is particularly important, since coaching processes are usually shorter than psychotherapy. In the ideal case it would take more time to build up new competences of the clients. The following list gives examples of *internal resources* of the client that can be activated in coaching (Behrendt, 2012):

- Skills and competences
- Positive experiences and previous success stories that give self-confidence and insight into other resources
- Motivations, goals, or visions
- Positive emotions that promote learning and self-confidence

- Negative emotions that give access to important needs and motivations and at the same time create a drive for change
- Hopes, self-confidence, and optimism, as these are the basis for mastering challenges
- Positive pictures, helpful positive self-talk, thinking of supporting people
- Role models as inner models for successful behavior

In addition to internal resources, *external resources* can also be used in coaching to support the achievement of the client's goals:

- Social and organizational resources: support from other influential people, the wider organization, or personal informal networks.
- Accessible technical and experiential knowledge (Internet, technical literature, experts, and professional networks).
- Technological resources for problem solving (e.g., new software or devices).
- Financial resources for the development and implementation of solutions.

Almost every coach claims to be resource-oriented. However, the objectively observable behavior differs greatly from the coaches' self-assessment, as evaluations of videos show (Behrendt, 2004). This discrepancy is related to the fact that it seems likely to react to problem descriptions of the clients in a deficit-focused manner (Flückiger et al., 2010), as in the following example from our video recordings.

Jess, a pregnant coaching client complains that her boss, Jack, does not offer her any relief and probably even hopes that she will call in sick permanently so that a substitute can be hired.

Deficit-focused verbalization (in the recorded video):

The coach reflects all the client's messages and emotions in a very similar, depressed tone and says compassionately: "*I notice you are sad. I don't even hear that your boss wants to do something good for you. That makes you so helpless.*"

Resource-oriented verbalization (as an alternative possibility):

"*It is admirable how you have managed so far to continue working despite the lack of relief. Where do you get the strength to cope with all this?*"

Understandable verbalization of negatively experienced situations can create emotional closeness to the client. In the case study, however, the coach does not detach from the deficit focus, but contributes to the client continuing to feel helpless. It would be important to explore the internal and external resources that can be used by the clients already during the problem analysis. In the case study it would be obvious to ask what possibilities of relief the client sees and who could support her in convincing the boss.

Professionalization in Coaching: Improvement of Success Factors

Which coaching behavior can be expected to predict the later success after the coaching has been ended? The answer to this question is of importance to all coaches and their clients. In this chapter three models of general success factors in coaching behavior, supported by empirical research, were presented. Comparative studies would be desirable, in which it is examined which models and individual factors can be better confirmed empirically with their assumptions on their respective effects. To verify, refine, and expand on the initial findings, further practice-oriented research is needed. Process analyses of the interaction behavior of coach and client are also promising (Ianiro et al., 2013). Qualitative methods and individual case studies, such as linguistic methods, can also be used to analyze recordings and transcripts of coaching sessions.

It would be desirable for more coaches to make audio or video recordings of coaching sessions available for research. If clients are made aware of the great practical importance of this research and the records are carefully anonymized, it is easier than some coaches think to obtain the client's consent. In return, coaches and clients can receive a report on the results and feedback on their behavior.

There are two ways to make the success factors usable for coaching practice:

1. *Success factors in coaching training:*
   Coaching training courses can include modules in which information about the success factors is provided and specific exercises with feedback from supervision are carried out (the authors of this article offer such training courses).
2. Additional *training for established coaches:*
   Similar to the training offered by the Berne Group for the further education of psychotherapists to improve resource activation (Flückiger et al., 2010), additional training on the success factors can be provided in the coaching field.

The self-assessments of coaches and their actual behavior are correlating very low (Schmidt & Thamm, 2008). Behavior observation is therefore indispensable for changing the practical behavior of coaches and improving the effectiveness of their behavior. To become more professional, we believe coaching therefore needs more studies with behavioral analyses and more training and special education based on verified success factors and related behavioral feedback.

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Systems Theories as a Basis for Coaching

Jürgen Kriz

Introduction and Case Study

What we call a "problem" in the field of coaching and counseling always has to do with social interactions and sense processes—no matter if we are working with teams or individuals. The problems in question cannot be attributed to an isolated individual. In addition, the ever more complex networking of social processes and general globalization are creating conditions for our living environment, to whose rapid changes we must react with ever new adaptations. Thus, coaching per se always has to do with interaction dynamics between many partial aspects on different levels of observation—in short: with systems. Nevertheless, it is precisely in the context of coaching that not only this attribute *systemic*, but also the references to an underlying *systems theory are* obviously understood to mean very different phenomena.

Case study: During the supervision of a renowned coaching team, the consultant Charlotte reports that she is accompanying a company with many hierarchical levels in its change management. Three meetings had already taken place. The question for the consultant was where to start at the next meeting and what she could do at which organizational level.

The supervisor wanted to expand the consultant's scope for creative work with different options in a process-oriented manner. It was therefore important to him to focus on whether and where, if necessary, this scope of possibilities and thus creativity would be unnecessarily restricted by too narrow (implicit) assumptions, concepts, and ways of understanding. He therefore often interrupted the consultant's description of the *structure of the company* with questions aimed at finding out whether the *facts* described could be seen and described differently in each case. The

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aim was to point to seemingly *self-evident* assumptions which might possibly blocking new ideas and solutions.

But this way of coaching made another team member increasingly restless. After about 20 minutes he interrupted the dialogue: The supervisor should not *always disturb* the counselor! If he had let her finish, everyone would have known by now how the company works and where the problems lie. And one could then consider together what to do.

Here, a different understanding of what *systems theory work* means became apparent: Some in the team assumed that systemic consulting consisted primarily of *grasping* the company to be advised *as a system* with its interaction structures and levels, its resources and deficits, etc., and then developing intervention strategies from this knowledge. Here, one would implicitly consider the description given by the supervisor as the *reality of the system*, compare it with the theoretical images of organizational structures and their problems or changes, and then engage in a discourse on which would be the best interventions. This was seen as the competence of a *systemic coach.*

The perspective of the supervisor, however, was that in the supervision situation the consultant first has a problem on which the focus should be directed. And that, if applicable, the *description of* the counselor, i.e. *her way of seeing and understanding,* might have something to do with her difficulties. So that then *their* change could perhaps change and enlarge the space of possible options for her action in the further consulting process. This is a clearly different understanding of *systemic coaching*.

The Numerous Sources for *Understanding Systems*

Fundamentals from Early Interdisciplinary Discourses on Systems

The above-mentioned heterogeneity in the understanding of the word *systemic is* not least related to various traditions of discourse and work in which systems theories played a role: As early as 1969 F. E. Emery published a collection of important contributions to systems theory from various disciplines under the title *Systems Thinking*, which appeared in the 1940s to 1960s (in 1981 even expanded to 2 volumes with 45 papers, Emery, 1981).

Emery was also a central member of the so-called *Tavistock Institute*, which already in the 1950s opposed the concept of *socio-technical systems*—as human–machine interactions—to the purely mechanical focus in industry. Likewise, the field theory of Lewin (1947) as well as works of the so-called *Michigan Group* stimulated the discussion on systemic approaches (such as leadership styles) in the work with groups and organizations even in the first half of the twentieth century.

Very influential for the systems theory discourses was the *General System Theory of* L. v. Bertalanffy (1968), whose development went back to the 1930s. Based on a

dynamic equilibrium (model: lake with an inflow and outflow), it describes structural equilibria in the organization of different systems in the field of physiology, biochemistry, or biology up to social systems in an exact form—also mathematically. He used terms and concepts that are also central to today's systems theories, such as *self-organization*, *complexity*, *feedback*, or *dynamic stability* (see below).

For a long time J. D. Miller's (1978) *Living Systems* also received a lot of attention—a system design describing 19 components or subsystems (like *converters*, *distributors*, *supporters*) on six system levels (from the cell to the organism and group to the society). Today, this approach would only be of historical significance if the metaphor of such (representational) system levels was not repeatedly used to describe systemic processes in coaching.

The same applies to the application of *cybernetics* by N. Wiener (1948) to non-technical areas: While cybernetic models of regulatory stability (*homeostasis model*: central heating with room thermostat) are still often helpful for technical constructions today, an appropriate transfer to, e.g., biological, psychological, or social systems fails because of the simple question: *Who controls the regulator?*—a problem that is not encountered when designing *self-organized* systems (see below).

In 1977 a systems-theoretical approach was awarded the Nobel Prize in Chemistry: It is about the *dissipative structures* of I. Prigogine (1981)—large, spatio-temporal patterns, which under certain conditions can arise self-organized during chemical reactions. In the broad field of consulting and coaching, this was initially referred to more often—a Nobel Prize gives the concept a high degree of dignity. However, despite the more popular presentation of his findings, the approach is too sophisticated to be able to permanently influence coaching concepts in a really well-founded way. Moreover, the central principles are also more fruitfully formulated and processed in another approach, synergetics (see below).

The highly elaborated and theoretically formulated concepts from the interdisciplinary discourses mentioned above have hardly been explicitly taken up in coaching. Indirectly, however, they play a considerable role in the context of recurring metaphors for describing and explaining coaching procedures.

Basics from the Family Therapy Practice

Probably the quantitatively most significant basis for systemic approaches to coaching comes from the tradition of family therapies, as it originated in the USA around 60 years ago. Initially, this was not a theoretical reorientation, but rather a praxology, which—independent of the therapists' respective basic orientations—expanded the setting: Instead of only working psychotherapeutically with individual patients or clients, family members were now also included.

It was only after this practice had quickly faded away with many approaches and considerable successes that theoretical explanations were also *added*; for example, in the 1960s through the works on human communication and its disorders (Watzlawick et al. 1967), which go back to concepts of the systemic mastermind

G. Bateson. This broadened the narrow focus on concrete work with families. Instead, fundamental aspects, patterns, and problems of interaction dynamics moved into the foreground of the analyses.

From the 1970s onwards, these approaches also spread throughout Europe, particularly via the teams in Milan around Mara Selvini-Palazzoli and in Heidelberg around Helm Stierlin. At the same time, a further differentiation of approaches and a conceptual concentration took place. Accordingly, four central directions can be distinguished:

(a) *Psychoanalytical*: classical concepts from psychoanalysis are extended here to work with families.
(b) *Structural*: the focus is on working on problematic structural boundaries between subsystems. It is a matter of, for example, clearly separating parents and children and not allowing intergenerational coalitions (e.g., mother and son against father). It is also important to respect the internal and external borders of the family, which should be clear and permeable—neither diffuse nor rigid.
(c) *Development-oriented*: special attention is paid to typical communication patterns that serve the self-esteem of the persons involved. For example, we work with sculptures in which the participants express and *set up* their actually perceived relationships or even their wishful thinking in pictorial poses to each other. These become visible and discussable.
(d) *Strategic*: here, through questioning techniques—e.g. *circular questioning* of each participant about the relationship assumptions of the others—and the so-called *paradoxical interventions,* a painful structure is so *disturbed that* these over-stabilized structures must necessarily realign themselves and can adapt to the overall conditions again.

Although these family therapy orientations are no longer practiced in their pure form today, the techniques developed in them form a *tool* in integrative, modified, and extended form, which is also used to a large extent in coaching.

Expansions took place primarily under the influence of constructivist and post-modern ideas and the *narrative turn that came* with them. This brought about a stronger centering of the work on the existing resources of the system in *solution-oriented* approaches (De Shazer, 1985). The focus is not on the problems and their developmental history, but on the situational exceptions, i.e. on those circumstances in which these problems *do not* occur.

All these approaches and procedures are implicitly based on theoretical concepts which—in terms of their focus and object of application—can be called *systems theories.* However, the theoretical aspects are barely or at best rudimentarily explicitly formulated. They are rather experience- and practice-oriented representations of working methods and *tools*, which are associatively linked to the ideas of the respective authors and originators about the possible modes of action. But perhaps this is what makes them so successful in practice. For, on the one hand, they provide therapists, consultants, and coaches with an undoubtedly rich tool *for self-experiment*, from which they can eclectically make use as required without coming into conflict with stringent theories. On the other hand, they offer a sufficiently unspecific

projection surface for one's own everyday theories and the experiences on which they are based.

Narrative-Descriptive System Metaphors

Very common and popular in the broader field of coaching (including organizational consulting and development as well as conflict and change management) are proto-typical images of phenomena considered in systems theory, which are intended to serve as *maps* for orientation. These too are often traded as *systems theory*.

Already about half a century ago J. Forrester (1961) in *Urban Dynamics* as well as D. L. and D. H. Meadows in *system modelling* showed that feedback from processes can lead to very unusual developments that are initially difficult to predict for everyday understanding (Meadows report: *Limits to growth* for the *Club of Rome* became known worldwide). A few decades later, several researchers at Boston's famous MIT took up some of these principles in popular and simplified form: *The Fifth Discipline* (Senge, 1990), or *Systems Thinking Tools* (Kim, 1994), showed the *architecture* and effect of simple (positive and negative) *feedback loops* on development and provided a number of basic patterns of such loops for diagnosing problems in organizations.

As valuable as such prefabricated and standardized cognitive tools may be with regard to systemic phenomena, they may be an aid against the widespread and much more simplistic and often inadequate linear cause–effect models, but they do not convey a systems-theoretically sound view beyond these standard tools. They are therefore to be regarded more as narrative system metaphors. This also applies to the currently highly regarded *Theory U* of Senges MIT colleagues Scharmer (2008)—whose systems-theoretical content between anecdotes and interview experiences can hardly be discerned (see the critique by Kühl, 2015).

Only implicit knowledge of systems theory is also acquired in the so-called *business games*: In simulated operational or ecological environments, role players can test and train their *system competence* in interactions with each other and with regard to such complex environments (Kriz, 2000). However, practical rather than theoretical skills are promoted. Moreover, these methods exceed the scope and possibilities of coaching and are more likely to be used in personnel and organizational development.

Essentials of Current Discourses on Systems Theory

The aspects mentioned so far—from family therapeutic, historical-scientific, and narrative-descriptive contexts—flow to varying degrees and in eclectic selection and composition into what appears in the current literature on coaching as a *systems-theoretical* reference. Pelz (2015) criticizes accordingly sharply: "The

prayer wheel-like claimed foundation ... in complex natural or social science theories proves to be a lie and deception in practice" and quotes other authors who speak of "undifferentiated theory collection" or "obscure management esotericism."

Such a criticism cannot be raised with the following systems theories: These are not a collection of tools, but, on the contrary, theories of consistently related statements, from which concrete procedures must first be derived. There too, however, are different prioritizations, which is why it is better to speak of *theory clusters.* Nevertheless, the essentials of these systems theories (in the narrower sense) can be summarized into the following four (interconnected) principles (see Kriz, 2016, 2017)

- It is about **processes** (not about *things*) of dynamically interlinked *parts*— whereby *parts* are to be understood as parts of the field (i.e., not material objects), e.g. actions, communications, thoughts, perceptions, etc. Terms such as *problem*, *disturbance*, *team*, *goal*, *personality,* etc., do not refer to something static, but to the possibly stable structure of a dynamic process.
- **Feedback/field**: The networking of the *elements of* the system is equivalent to feedback: the change in one part (e.g., through intervention) is propagated in the system and ultimately affects all the others. This characterizes the term *field*, which—as the totality of the (considered) parts—reacts holistically. Classical mechanistic intervention principles, which are successful when denting a tin can or repairing a machine, would be inadequate here: For example, the structure of a waterfall cannot be changed by *denting it.*
- **Micro-macro level (bottom-up/top-down)**: The networked and feedback dynamics of the *parts* (micro level) forms bottom-up self-organized *orders* (macro level), which in turn influence the dynamics of the *parts* top-down in the further process. This order is self-organized.

  A vivid example is the emergence of a common clapping rhythm after a concert from the noise of many individual rhythms; this is usually self-organized, because nobody jumps on stage and sets the rhythm for all the others (which would then be externally organized).
- **System–environment relationship**: The consideration of a particular system is accompanied by the Differentiation between the system and its environment as well as by ideas about the relationship between the two. For example, order formation is something inherent in the system, but there are several (usually a very large number) of such inherent order possibilities. Therefore, the realization or updating of a certain order is always an adaptation of the conditions of the system to the conditions of the environment.

However, these characteristics are interpreted and implemented quite differently in the various approaches:

Autopoietic Systems

The artificial term *autopoiesis* (from gr. *autos* = to make oneself and *poiein* = to make) was first introduced at the beginning of the 1970s by the neurobiologists H. Maturana and F. Varela in order to grasp and define the processes of what can be called biological *life on the* level of a single cell. About a decade later, the sociologist N. Luhmann also adopted this term for his theory of social systems, focusing primarily on social macro-processes. Both autopoiesis concepts have been further developed for other questions and areas after their introduction; however, despite the same name, they still differ considerably.

Autopoiesis (I) à la Maturana and Varela

Maturana and Varala (1992) are concerned with describing the self-organizing function of the living cell. Central to this are in particular their differentiation (usually by means of a cell membrane) from other cells and the operationally autonomous self-production of the components (cell nucleus, mitochondria, etc.) by these very components. A living cell is thus understood as a network of chemical processes, which produces in a recursively feedback manner precisely those parts and processes that produce themselves. In this way the cell is realized as a material unit. In this sense, autopoietic systems are regarded as *operationally closed* systems.

This self-reference was—beyond philosophy and mathematics—quite revolutionary four decades ago and has triggered many epistemological debates. The autopoiesis concept was then developed by Maturana into a comprehensive epistemological concept with which he wanted to provide neurobiological support for the so-called *radical constructivism*: he emphasizes the operational and functional isolation of the nervous system, which is unable to differentiate between internal and external triggers. Despite their operational closure, autopoietic systems are not independent of the environment, but are in contact via *structural coupling* with it—i.e. a spatio-temporal coordination of the organism's state changes. However, it remains unclear exactly how this will take place.

Since Maturana and Varela are neurobiologists, the concept of autopoiesis is sometimes presented in the literature as a *neurobiologically-based* theory. However, this must at least be put into perspective because there are no empirical correlations between the (classical) neurobiological work of Maturana and the autopoiesis concept: The theory is neither directly derived from Maturana's experimental findings, nor can it be described as an empirically based theory, as Maturana himself had to admit when questioned (Riegas & Vetter, 1990, p. 36).

Autopoiesis (II) à la Luhmann

If today one refers to autopoiesis in the field of coaching, counseling, and therapy, the theory of *social systems* of the sociologist N. Luhmann (1996) is usually meant. Although the latter explicitly adopted the term autopoiesis from Maturana and Varela—including the postulates of *operational closure* and *self-generation*—he gave the approach as a whole a quite different direction of interpretation.

Luhmann distinguishes between three systems, which differentiate themselves from their respective environments by the fact that only certain operations are connected: *Society* or *social systems* (operations: communications) are contrasted with the two systems *life* or *biological systems* (operation: organismic processes) and *consciousness* or *mental systems* (operation: intrapsychic, cognitive processes). According to Luhmann, all three systems are operationally closed—they are therefore only environment for each other, without informational input and output. The interdependencies, which Luhmann of course does not deny, are addressed by him via the rather unspecified concept of *interpenetration.*

Communication, the operator of social systems, is conceived as a unit of information, sharing, and understanding. Through mutual expectations-expectations (i.e., *I expect what others expect of me*), for example, this unity can be stabilized in a certain way.

In discourses on coaching, reference is often made to autopoiesis—but often not even differentiating which variant—Maturana or Luhmann—is meant. That does not clear things up. Particularly as Maturana and Varela, on the one hand, and Luhmann on the other, each of them, more or less friendly disguised, accuse the other of inadequate use of terms, confusion, and annoyance (e.g., Maturana, 1990, p. 38; Luhmann, 1988, p. 46). Luhmann's systems theory, which is mainly received in Germany and Italy, but hardly ever in the USA or other countries, is accused by critics of being unnecessarily complicated.

More problematic than the language of representation, however, is the focus of autopoiesis on operational closure and self-production: this makes the stability of a system understandable—but not its change. And the influences of different process levels (individuals and their actions, teams, departments, etc.), which are important for coaching, can only be addressed via very vague concepts such as *interpenetration* (Luhmann) or *structural coupling* (Maturana and Varela).

Gestalt Theoretical and Synergetic Systems Theory

The above-mentioned "essentials" of current systems theories were already central aspects of theory formation and research within the framework of the Gestalt psychology of the Berlin School almost a 100 years ago (Wertheimer, Koffka, Köhler, Lewin, Goldstein et al.). Thus, *Gestalten* are dynamic systems that organize

themselves bottom-up and top-down and stand out from the system's environment by being separated in the sense of a figure-ground relation.

Especially for work with and in groups, reference is often made to Lewin and his field theory, because concepts of group-dynamic phenomena are discussed here (Antons & Stützle-Hebel, 2015). Thus Lewin's (1947) 3-phase model of change—*unfreezing changing/moving*, *refreezing*)—is very often quoted in the context of change processes (although mostly in a very strongly vulgarized form with tool character). The latter also applies to *Gestalt therapy*, which has developed many techniques that are also used by coaches. However, the vast majority of Gestalt *therapy* is not based on *theory*, let alone systems theory. Here too, therefore, useful tools are dominating the discourses and practical work.

More than half a century after the beginning of Gestalt psychology, system-theoretical concepts in the natural sciences began to penetrate the mainstream. The *synergetics* of the physicist H. Haken (1983, 1984) is particularly fruitful in inter-disciplinary terms, since he very soon developed his approach beyond physics as a general theory of self-organization processes. *Synergetics* now represents an inter-disciplinary, worldwide research program with many thousands of publications. Although these come still mainly from the natural sciences—but from the 1990s onwards also from psychology, sociology, education, or economics. Haken himself has often emphasized the connection to classical gestalt psychology (Haken & Schiepek, 2010).

In *synergetics, there are* very precise models of how the feedback processes of a system form bottom-up orders, which then determine the further dynamics top-down. However, the conditions from the system's environment are also relevant for this: if these change, the system initially continues to try to stabilize itself until it then—if the change is even greater—finds a new adaptation in an *order–order transition* (as in Lewin's 3-phase model). However, in order to treat the problems of coaching adequately, one has to formulate the principles of synergetics not in the language of the natural sciences which among other things deal with states of energy but in the language of human sciences which deal with information and meaning. This is implemented by the "person-centered systems theory" (Kriz, 2017), where order–order transitions have to do with overcoming an inadequate reduction of Complexity to a more adequate one.

Such *order–order transitions* can be seen as the core of the work of coaches (as well as counselors, therapists, or educators): Many of the *problems* that clients bring to us are based on process structures that once had worked rather well. But then the previous conditions or requirements have changed, and the system would now have to adapt to these new conditions—i.e. to make a transition from the old order to a new order.

In everyday life, there are always such transitions and they usually work out sufficiently well. However, coaching is sought by those people for whom such a new adaptation *does not* work out. The problems they come with can thus be understood as overly stable *solutions to* requirements that have long since changed. This very often has to do with the interpretations of meaning which are attributed to the

circumstances, the communications of others, one's own resources, previous experiences, etc.

Synergetic systems theory is able to show how feedback loops—e.g. internal (*self-talk*) and interpersonal communication—reduce complexity and stabilize order (Kriz, 2016, 2017). Such a reduced and stabilized order can, if necessary, obscure the view of one's own resources and solutions. From this perspective, the many approaches to coaching can be understood as destabilization of rigid and deadlocked sense structures. Approaches such as systemic questioning, solution-oriented conversation, *disrespect* for previous views (while at the same time respecting the people), etc., offer very complex informational cognitive-narrative environmental conditions.

Helpful for a concrete implementation in coaching are the *generic principles* formulated by (Haken & Schiepek, 2010, p. 436 ff.) which also play a central role in the person-centered systems theory (Kriz, 2017).

Conclusion

There are undoubtedly many concepts and approaches to helping other people—this also applies to the work of coaches. If, however, one calls one's approach *systemic* or even *system-theoretical*, one should be able to explicitly explain which concepts and principles one is referring to and how these justify the respective action—otherwise one is only feeding the extensive criticism of an unreflected system metaphor.

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Team Coaching and Effective Team Leadership

Martian Slagter and Celeste Wilderom

Introduction

In order to enhance task performance and the satisfaction of workers and clients, leaders and teams must deal with organizational change successfully (e.g., Hawkins, 2014). One way to enhance this is through stimulating reflexivity as a key aspect of team learning and developing (e.g., Greif, 2008). In line with the increasing speed of changes in the world, a growing number of team leaders have added the role of team coach to their repertoire when dealing with permanent changes in their organizations (e.g., Buljac & Van Woerkom, 2015). Although coaching teams is often seen as an act of effective leadership (Hackman & Wageman, 2005), there are also many external team coaches aiding teams and their leaders to deal with: increasing performance pressures; demands for job satisfaction; or to overcome their disagreements and conflicts.

In this essay, we discuss the similarities and differences between the roles of an effective team leader and external team coach. The basic requirement from a team coach is that he[1] *always* strives to enable the team to learn. A team leader is also responsible for regular task execution. Even though an effective leader is able to bring about team learning, and may occasionally act as a team coach, one may ask: what can a team coach and team leader learn from *each other*? Before we address

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[1] 'He' refers, of course, to either he or she.

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this question, we will define the main constructs of this essay: leader, team, and team coach.

Leader

For the purpose of this paper, we focus on the transformational leadership style (Bass, 2008), because leaders with this style are commonly assumed to lead change effectively. This style builds relationships among and enables empowerment of followers (see chapter "Leadership theories as knowledge base in coaching"). There are circumstances under which such leaders may (temporarily) not be effective, as a result of which it may be necessary to contract an external coach in order to enhance a team's (or leader's) effectiveness.

Team

We define a team as a unit of people in a work context. Team members have interdependent tasks and specialized roles. The group can be small or large, temporary or long lived and has to perform one or more tasks (Hackman & Wageman, 2005). The internal relations in a team's life cycle are crucial. Tuckman's well-known group developmental theory (Tuckman, 1965; Tuckman & Jensen, 1977) includes the following phases: forming, storming, norming, performing, and adjourning. Not all groups follow this sequential pattern of development. Hackman and Wageman (2005, p. 275) point to Gersick's (1988) alternative model: the beginnings, the midpoints, and the ends of a performing period. They conclude "that the readiness of work teams for coaching interventions changes systematically across their life cycle." A team that is changing in composition, especially if turnover is high or the team is growing in size, may require coaching to further optimize its performance.

External Team Coach

A team coach executes "a learning intervention designed to increase the collective capability and performance of a group or team, through the application of the coaching principles of assisted reflection, analysis and motivation for change" (Clutterbuck, 2014, p. 271). A coach will act systematically and methodically and stimulate individual self-reflection and team reflexivity. Reflexivity is the extent to which teams reflect upon and modify their functioning (Greif, 2008; Widmer et al. 2009; Buljac & Van Woerkom, 2015). Both individual members and teams as a whole engage in learning. External team coaches ensure that team members can

learn from the different perspectives and reflections, and that interactive team learning takes place as well (Ward, 2010). We will argue, in this chapter, that the distinction between an external team coach and a leader is not primarily in terms of skills, but in the unique roles or positions. Accordingly, team leaders and coaches approach and affect mutual relationships and trust differently.

Three types of team coaches can, in practice, be distinguished: the team leader; the internal professional team coach; and the external professional team coach. Team coaching is usually integrated into a leader's daily activities. He is a member of the team with a specific role as a leader, including the matching responsibilities. We note that there is scarce empirical research on the effectiveness of the leader as a coach, and especially in team coaching. We will argue in this chapter that the most important impact a team leader can have as a team coach is stimulating the reflexivity and empowerment of team members. Coaching the team in its reflexivity and developmental processes may not always be easily combined with one's a regular leadership role, such as evaluating direct reports and assessing their results. The team leaders' evaluating task is especially important as it affects members in the degree of being open in their communication (Hunt & Weintraub, 2002).

An internal team coach is part of the team's larger organization and is a coach for different intra-organizational teams. Such a coaching role can also be assumed informally by regular members of a team (peer coaching) (Dimas et al., 2016). In the perspective of this essay, we will not elaborate on these latter positions of intra-organizational and informal team coaching. We will focus on the *external* team coach. Such a coach is assigned, temporarily and formally, to a particular team for an explicit purpose; in the below, we use the term "team coach" for this position. We will compare the role of an external team coach to a team leader's role. We do so in order to help decision-makers recognize when to hire an external coach and when to carry on "doing it yourself" (DIY) as a team leader.

Comparing Team Coaches to Team Leaders

Team Coach Characteristics and Skills

Effective team coaches have at least the following characteristics:

- A high personal developmental level: a relatively high educational level and/or a body of relevant knowledge. They join coach platforms in order to exchange professional coaching ideas.
- Integrity: relying on sound judgment (moral compass) in all circumstances; maintaining high standards on ethical behaviors.
- Confidence: feel self-confident as well as confident about the potential of the coachees and the coaching process.

- Coaching experience: well trained and experienced in coaching within organizations (Baek-Kyoo Joo, 2005).
- The ability to form effective relationships with team members and leaders.

Regardless of the theories used by a coach, the foundation of effective coaching is rooted in collaboration skills and accountability (e.g., Passmore, 2020; Stober & Grant, 2006). In order to enhance this collaboration and stimulate accountability in a team and their members (Llewellyn, 2015), coaches are able to:

1. *Slow down to speed up*. Take the time to make observations and analyze them clearly. It implies taking the time to check biases and assumptions in order to improve the feedback given by the coach during the process.
2. *Think systemically*. Look beyond the immediate or obvious, focus on the interactions, and be aware of the larger picture instead of just what happens in the room (Hawkins, 2014).
3. *Use influence over persuasion*. Instead of convincing others of one's point of view, a coach will support the team members in forming own opinions and conclusions, as well as helping them in their professional and personal life.
4. *Ask powerful questions and then listen*. By doing so, one is showing real interest in the other and therefore contributing to a trustful relationship.
5. *Look below the surface*. Understand the nature of the people and the factors that influence human behavior. Eminent in this context is that a team coach is aware of the functional and dysfunctional dynamics of a given team (Clutterbuck, 2014).

This set of skills and characteristics are not exclusively reserved for coaches. Reflective leaders may also have or use them (Bass, 2008). Either way, the leader and the team coach all need education, training, time, and maturity to acquire these skills and characteristics as well as the accompanying attitudes and values.

Foci of Transformational Leaders

Transformational leadership is elaborated elsewhere in this handbook (see chapter). In this chapter we will take its four main foci into consideration, each of which has accompanying characteristics, attitudes and skills (Bartram & Inceoglu, 2011): develop a vision; set goals; gain support; and deliver operational success. The effective transformational leader "emphasizes the exchange that occurs between a leader and followers" (Bass, 2008, p. 618) whereby inspirational motivation and intellectual stimulation vis-à-vis work tasks are also important factors; effective transformational leaders also see themselves as part of a "relational team."

Focus	Effective External Team Coach	Effective Team Leader
1. Develop a vision	- -	+ +
2. Set goals	+ -	+ +
3. Gain support	+ +	+ +
4. Deliver operational success	- -	+ +
5. Stimulate reflection	+ +	+ -
6. Self-leadership	+ +	+ -
7. Contractual relationship	+ +	+ -

++ eminently important

+- of importance

-- no focus

Fig. 1 Comparing the foci of effective external team coaches and leaders

Foci of Team Coaches

We will now discuss the three main foci of effective team coaches. *First:* stimulate reflection. An important part of a team coach's work is to stimulate reflection in team members in order to mature them and to deliver more or better performance or output (Greif, 2008; Widmer et al., 2009; Buljac & Van Woerkom, 2015). *Second:* develop self-leadership and responsibility for the work. An important attitude in self-leadership is to be willing and brave enough to 'look in the mirror' and reflect on one's work activities and contexts. Kohlrieser et al. (2012), Kets de Vries (2014), and McLaughlin and Cox (2016) for instance describe the latter extensively. *Third:* contractual relationship. Research on coaching shows that 'relationship forming' is important if not a crucial skill for an effective coach (e.g., De Haan, 2008). Using this comparative framework of effective team leadership and coaching, we will now elaborate on seven differentiating elements between an effective team leader and an external coach (Fig. 1).

Develop a Vision

Transformational team leadership has an impact on a team's performance through the way the followers are stimulated and inspired (e.g., Kirkbride, 2006; Bass, 2008). To inspire members of the team, the vision of the organization and the team needs to be as clear and compelling as possible. Consequently, the leader tends to be much more team-task focused than a coach. After all, a leader has the overall responsibility for the productive well-being of a team.

In contrast, a team coach will support and facilitate the team working on their tasks but has no formal responsibility for the execution of the work. The task of a team coach is not an active one in terms of developing the vision. They will understand and endorse the given vision, including the guidelines for the targets of

the organization. Regarding the effective practices of team coaching, the coach is interested in the organization at large. He has knowledge about the sector in which the organization and team (and its issues and dilemmas) are embedded and is aware of and familiar with the current context.

Set Goals

Another focus of a team leader is setting and sharing goals. These goals or targets are mostly economical or technological in nature, or commercially driven. Another aspect of goal setting is the focus on the developmental team goals, but not only task and result-related goals. In practice, the external coach will focus on the learning or developmental goals that are mostly related to the quality of the relations and intra-team and inter-team collaboration. These goals can evolve over time. The team goals will also cover competencies of the team as a whole, e.g., giving and receiving feedback; conflict management; communicate respectfully; working efficiently, etc. The supportive contribution of an external team coach is to intervene and to enhance the quality of the team interactions while taking the organizational team goals as a fact. The type of goals an external coach is responsible for do not pertain, therefore, to the actual team tasks but to the goals a coach and the team want to attain together for the good of the team.

The goal-setting focus of an external team coach differs from that of the team leader. The importance of goal setting in coaching is described widely (e.g., Whitmore, 2009; Greif, 2008). It is also important to enhance the quality of team interactions such as collaboration and giving feedback. These are keys to effective team development.

The points that an effective leader and coach have in common in terms of goal setting are that they must gain a team's support for and commitment to its goals. The role of the team coach is to facilitate rather than be substantively responsible. In practice, goal setting is a part of the coaching process. This process of setting effective team coaching goals reveals the needs and wishes of the team members and helps them to look below the surface for a while. Goal commitment by the team members can arise due to reflecting on these goals together: in advance of or during the team coaching process itself. Mutual accountability occurs when the team recognizes and actively pursues better conditions for accomplishing its goals (i.e., task- and performance-related as well as developmental coaching goals) (Llewellyn, 2015).

Gain Support

Gaining support for the team goals and motivation to work together better, involves empowerment in order to deliver results. Empowerment is about unleashing the

potential in team members to contribute to team performance. An effective team leader shows a belief in the potential of every member of his team. In this way, he addresses the innate desire of humans to develop and grow (e.g., Temple, 2008), including a balancing act while searching for safety, on the one hand, and the need to explore, on the other (Robertson, 2003). Kohlrieser et al. (2012) calls this the "safety/risk" paradox. To inspire and motivate others to unleash everyone's potential, a team leader has to care and support, and at the same time challenge members to take some risk and explore new ways of behaving or thinking: in other words "caring and daring" (Kohlrieser et al., 2012) at the same time.

Empowerment, as set out in the above, is also a necessary skill of a coach. Part of empowering is: using influence over persuasion; asking questions with real interest; and listening well. A coach uses skills and concepts from his "toolbox," such as therapy and consulting (Grant, 2009) and he is trained to apply them. Therefore, he can be a source of inspiration to the team leader. By understanding the nature of humans and the complexity of group dynamics in relation to team-performance tasks and leadership, he will empower, motivate and challenge the team members to work toward their developmental goals. The coach is loyal to the agreed-upon goals without being formally responsible for them. Hence, within the domain of empowerment, the team leader and coach are similar to each other but they respond to the team goals differently. The team coach mostly focuses on the developmental goals while the leader may focus on other types of goals.

Deliver Operational Success

Some of the activities and responsibilities of a team leader is translating the team vision and strategy into clear effective work processes and tasks. A transformational leader aims to influence members' behaviors positively and so enhance their performance. Sometimes, this might entail changing structures or processes, responsibilities, etc. Continuously improving the operational execution of a team's vision is of the highest priority for any team leader (e.g., Llewellyn, 2015).

Since a team coach is not formally part of a team and has no performance responsibility, he will only intervene in specific team issues such as the cooperating process; trust; accountability; ownership in the context of team successes; etc. These are learning interventions "designed to increase collective capability and performance of a group or team" (Clutterbuck, 2014, p. 271). Typically, an external team coach will help members to understand the nature of their interaction patterns better. In that spirit, he provides the team with feedback about both effective and dysfunctional interactions between members: in a way that they learn from it and can engage in remediation (Stober & Grant, 2006).

Stimulate Reflection

Team reflexivity has been identified as an important positive determinant of team performance (e.g., Buljac & Van Woerkom, 2015), and also as a key component of team learning (Patterson et al., 2005). Team coaching will provide the team with more time to look into the mirror instead of looking merely through the window (Baek-Kyoo Joo, 2005; Greif, 2008; Llewellyn, 2015). When there is a need to change *rapidly*, the team is challenged with developing reflexivity because people tend to need extra time to achieve this. A coach is inclined to slow things down by helping the team to develop this ability to reflect. To reflect on the past and the present helps to create awareness about both personal and collective belief systems. Since coaching is always goal- and future-oriented, a team also needs to look ahead and turn the past- and present-oriented reflections into reflections of the future. Therefore, we suggest the term "*pro-flection*," because team coaching is also geared toward actively and positively creating a way of thinking about the future, including solutions and new actions; it aims to enrich members' behavioral repertoires. In order to achieve this, a team coach or team leader should use the skills 'observe and think' systemically, because the team's performance is influenced as much by external as by internal factors (Hawkins, 2014).

Team reflections are generally interconnected with individual reflections (Greif, 2008). If individual self-awareness has been stimulated in the team, self-reflection processes and re- and proflection at the team level are possible. The reflections and pro-flections are, in the end, goal focused and ultimately help the team increase their autonomy in finding their own solutions. Herein lies a challenge for the team leader, in terms of being a part of a system, running it, and working on transformation and development at the same time. Taking a coach-enabled systemic view on its own interaction patterns is complicated for a team leader because of the intertwined relations between the team members and the leader himself. These relations are particularly burdened when the team has relational types of problems. In practice, being a part of the team implies you are a part of the team's problems. A team leader, or team members, can possibly undermine the level of team trust and psychological safety. An external coach can help then: especially if the team leader has a conflict-avoiding tendency.

The term psychological safety is a widely used construct. It signals that the team members' contributions to the team discussions are appreciated by the team. It defines the shared belief of members of a team that the team is safe for the exchange of interpersonal viewpoints (Edmondson, 1999). Widmer et al. (2009) found that team characteristics such as trust and psychological safety among team members, a shared vision, and diversity as well as leadership styles of the team leader, influence the level of team reflexivity. These empirical results underscore the complexity and potential of team coaching. It is especially important that when a team conflict arises, the team members develop an awareness about the patterns of interaction in which they operate. The goal of coaching is to give feedback and feedforward, in order to create this awareness and it is a part of the ability to reflect and pro-flect. It leads to an

increased level of team member autonomy, individually and as a team as a whole. The conflicts that are task related tend to be solved mostly by the team members themselves. However, when they become relational issues, they have a negative influence on a team's climate (Widmer et al., 2009). Hiring a team coach on time is therefore important. With regard to team learning, the team leader and coach can then complement each other, especially if they manage to work together solidly and transparently.

Self-Leadership

What you learn in life defines you as a person and managing yourself is part of what is nowadays called self-leadership (e.g., Kohlrieser et al., 2012; Kets de Vries, 2014). This applies to team leaders, team members, as well as to coaches. Hence, an effective team leader is aware of his role in the system and uses this insight in his actions and interventions when leading the team. He needs a suitable set of skills, attitudes, and experiences to live up to the standard of effective leadership. Yet, leadership is also innately personal. People will only challenge themselves if they find a so-called secure base in their life. They should feel safe and socially respected in order to take risks with trust and cooperation (Robertson, 2003). As an effective leader, you are a secure base for your members. In short: in order to *be* a secure base, you need to *have* a secure base (Kohlrieser et al., 2012, p. 15).

The way you see the world and direct your focus is part of self-reflection and, consequently, part of your belief system and your drives. Kohlrieser et al. (2012) call this "awareness of one's own focus: The Mind's Eye." To challenge team members to change and take risks, "leaders should begin from a position of as much understanding of their own emotions as possible in order to facilitate emotional balance" (McLaughlin & Cox, 2016, p. 88). An effective coach requires at least the five skills/characteristics to achieve this (see paragraph #2). In order to gain and train these skills and characteristics at a high professional coach level, team coaches also need to look regularly "into their own mirror." Team coaches can help team leaders to do so in a "preventive" spirit.

Contractual Relationship

Employing a temporary external team coach in a smooth way contributes to high coach performance. The aim of an external team coach is, by nature and professional standard, to secure trust and psychological safety, as a condition for the team to grow to a higher-performing status. In this context, the coaching literature commonly emphasizes the so-called three-cornered contract (e.g., Turner & Hawkins, 2016 Baek-Kyoo Joo, 2005; Napper & Newton, 2014).
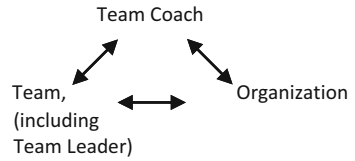
The reciprocal lines in the triangle in Fig. 2 represent the relation between the stakeholders. The lines between the team coach and the organization constitute the formal contract between the team coach and the people who are asking for or are subject to coaching on behalf of the organization. Contracting is an important aspect in effective internal and external coaching because it aligns the responsibilities, targets, roles, relations, and communication and therefore defines the bond among the actors involved. In the perspective of trust and psychological safety, effective contracting ensures clarity and a maximum of openness about goals and intentions. Every stakeholder in a contract has his own set of tasks and responsibilities. The members of a team, including the team leader, are committed to the endeavor and the enhancing of a team's performance. In practice, this commitment is imperative for effective coaching. Practice has shown that if team members do not expend sufficient effort toward this developmental aim, or have no fierce desire to learn and grow (Robertson, 2003), the team coach cannot work effectively with the team member's reflections and proflections. Such lack of commitment would negatively affect the attitude toward giving and receiving feedback and feedforward as an aspect of team learning.

Trust, confidentiality, and clarity are key success factors in terms of the relations between participants in team coaching (e.g., De Haan et al., 2011; De Haan, 2008; De Haan & Sills, 2010; Stober & Grant, 2006). The three-cornered contract shows that multiple relations or the responsibilities of one person can contribute to a conflict of interest and thus undermine the potential effectiveness of coaching. The team leader, as a team coach, experiences barriers in obtaining full openness. When under pressure from time or dropped results, the team leader can be easily tempted to switch to his executing role in which case the goal of developing the team will take second place. This can be especially the case if the team leader implicitly coaches his team members in their regular daily tasks instead of the planned sessions that are solely dedicated to team development.

A team coach must thus be careful in the contracting phase and has to: withstand the pressure of time or appeals of speeding up results or worse; mixing the roles of coach and leader, at the same time; or disclosing confidentialities about team members to the organization. He would then run the risk of losing his independency and therefore jeopardize trust, openness, and significant team learning. This independency namely enables effective coaching interventions. That is why an effective leader is restricted as a team coach.

An increasing number of studies suggest that the level of mutual trust and respect in team-member relations has an impact on a coach's performance (e.g., Boyce et al., 2010; Clutterbuck, 2014; Duckworth & De Haan, 2009). We suggest that working

conscientiously with these relations, relations that are well-conditioned by the three-cornered contract, is therefore a key to effective team coaching.

Discussion and Conclusion

In this chapter, we have compared the characteristics of effective external team coaches and team leaders. The key distinguishing point relates to trust and the coach's contracted roles in the organization. It is important for both the leader and the coach to be consistent (Robertson, 2003) and to create a secure base (Kohlrieser et al., 2012) for the members of a team: by being self-reflective and by stimulating reflexivity and proflexivity. Both modes of behaviors could create awareness and accountability for each team member's own part in the success or failure of the team's development and interdependent task execution, especially in the face of continuous change.

Under certain conditions, a transformational leader, if properly trained, will be able to coach a team as well. By being part of the team and representing the organization as a whole, he will be able to share their commitment to visions and goals with his team members. Being a part of the system is an advantage for the team leader. Yet, when things get tough and become conflictual, the independency of an external professional coach is advantage. A coach's experience in group dynamics, his knowledge and good judgment, combined with independency, will make him become of added value in the development or maturing of a team. In practice, the external coach will often not only work with the team but will also engage in empowering the team leader into becoming a more effective team coach, also by being a good role model.

In contrast to the growing amount of research on individual or executive coaching, research on the effect of team coaching is scarce (Dimas et al., 2016). We plead for further research in this growing field of coaching (Passmore & Fillery Travis, 2011; Grant, 2016), in light of the increasing demands for organizational and team-based changes and opportunities. In addition, the empirical research on the efficacy of managerial coaching is still underdeveloped. Also, attention to ineffective coaching by the team leader (Ellinger et al., 2014) must be dealt with more seriously: by both managers and coaches, with respect to their own roles. Academic research could play a role here, so that ineffective coaching can be eventually banned more easily.

We did not elaborate on the different characteristics of a team (e.g., Clutterbuck, 2014) or the various team developmental phases (e.g., Tuckman, 1965; Hackman & Wageman, 2005). Clutterbuck (2014) names a few distinguishing team features, including the degree of task interdependence; the nature of relationships; and the content of and readiness for the tasks, per member. In this spirit, an interesting future research question is for example: in what ways do team characteristics affect effective team coaching in the context of organizational change?

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Team Coaching Research: The State of Play

Rebecca Jones

What Is Team Coaching?

At a fundamental level, team coaching can be defined as an interaction between a coach and a team (Dimas et al., 2016). Smolska (2019) argues that in team coaching, there is the work of a coach with a team, the work of a coach with the team leader and the work of a leader with a team (which the coach looks at). Dimas et al. (2016) propose that team coaching can be provided by a person external to the group, the team leader or even by members of the group. In this chapter, I will focus specifically on the first two types of team coaching.

Firstly, let us look at team coaching when provided by a practitioner independent of the team. Despite the growth in the practice of team coaching of this nature, its definition is unclear. Wotruba (2016) described the team coaching literature as 'messy'. In a review of 15 published definitions of team coaching, Jones et al. (2019) found that there was little agreement about the role of the team coach. Therefore, to address the questions: what is team coaching and what does it look like from the perspective of those providing it? Jones et al. (2019) surveyed 400 practising team coaches to understand their experience of delivering team coaching. Their results led to the identification of the following defining components of team coaching:

- **A common goal**

    A common goal is an essential component of team coaching. It can be said that team coaching is focused on assisting a team to achieve a common goal, purpose, objective or mission.

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- **Team performance**

  The output or outcome of team coaching is improved team performance. In summary, team coaching enables individuals to perform effectively as a team.

- **Team learning and reflection**

  Team coaching generates improvements in team performance; it is a dynamic collective process where team members learn from self-reflections and team member reflections.

- **Team coaching activities**

  A team coach improves the team's capability to achieve their shared goal and improve team performance by raising awareness, improving communication and building trusting relationships among team members.

- **Focus on the team as a system**

  In team coaching, the team is viewed as comprising of individuals. However, these individuals form an interconnected network that can be viewed as a complex whole. This complex whole is the focus of team coaching.

- **Advanced coaching skills**

  Coaching a group of individuals all at the same time is inherently more complex than coaching each individual on a one-to-one basis. Advanced coaching skills include: the ability to listen to and take into account multiple perspectives; the ability to observe and interpret interactions; a good grasp on team facilitation techniques; and the ability to build trust within the team coaching sessions, thus enabling effective openness and sharing for reflective learning.

- **Coaching techniques**

  Team coaching involves the application of traditional coaching techniques to achieve the desired outcomes. For example, a core component of coaching is the use of dialogue and conversation and, in particular, effective questioning to encourage reflection. In addition, the coach is not an expert and does not provide instruction, training or guidance.

- **A longer-term intervention**

  When compared to other forms of team development, team coaching is a longer-term intervention where a series of sessions are provided rather than a one-off event.

The analysis resulted in Jones et al. (2019) providing the following definition of team coaching:

Team coaching is a team-based learning and development intervention that considers the team to be a system and is applied collectively to the team as a whole. The focus of team coaching is on team performance and the achievement of a common or shared team goal. Team learning is empowered via specific team coaching activities for self and team reflection, which are facilitated by the team coach(es) through the application of coaching techniques such as impactful, reflective questioning which raises awareness, builds trusting relationships and improves communication. A team coach does not provide advice or solutions to the team. Rather, team coaching requires advanced coaching skills from the coach such as

considering multiple perspectives simultaneously and observing and interpreting dynamic interactions and is typically provided over a series of sessions rather than as a one-off intervention. (p. 13).

The alternative type of team coaching explored in this chapter is when team coaching is provided by the team leader. The key contribution in the area of team leader as coach is provided by Hackman and Wageman's (2005) theory of team coaching. In this paper, Hackman and Wageman's (2005) posit that the impact of team coaching interventions on team effectiveness is contingent on the extent to which 'proper coaching functions are fulfilled competently at appropriate times and in appropriate circumstances' (p. 269). The theory comprises three distinguishing features; function, timing and conditions. Function captures three types of functions that coaching serves to enable team effectiveness. These functions are aligned with specific time points in the team's task lifecycle, when they are deemed to have the greatest effect. Firstly, coaching that is concerned with team effort, such as building collective commitment and minimising process losses is referred to as motivational coaching. Motivational coaching is argued to be most appropriate at the beginning of a team's task life cycle, when a team is simultaneously engaged with the task and interpersonal processes such as the formulation of group norms, role differentiation, boundary management, and task engagement. The beginning of the team's life cycle affords a critical opportunity to orientate the team around motivational coaching interventions. Secondly, consultative coaching is concerned with the team's performance strategy, with a focus on challenging inefficient task routines and fostering innovative work processes aligned with task requirements. The midpoint of a team's work is an ideal time to coach teams in formulating work strategies, given a team's logged task experience and likely receptivity to performance improvement (Gersick, 1989). Thirdly, the function of educational coaching is to address team knowledge and skills, maximising the potential of team members, minimising redundant contributions and identifying development needs. The end of the team's task provides the optimal opportunity to reflect upon performance, internalise lessons learned, rationalise failures and identify skill and knowledge deficits. The theory of team coaching also outlines several conditions, which are posited to moderate the effects of team coaching; task and organisational constraints (the influence of task type and external influences on team performance) and group design. While Hackman and Wageman's (2005) theory of team coaching continues to be an important paper in the field of team leader as coach, it has yet to be empirically tested or validated.

What Is the Impact of Team Coaching?

Research that seeks to address questions such as 'what is the impact of team coaching?' and 'does team coaching work?' are generally in high demand given the pressure on coaches, learning and development procurement and organisations alike to demonstrate a return-on-investment from interventions such as team coaching (Jones, 2021). Despite the demand for answers to questions such as

these, there is currently only a small pool of evidence in this area. A recent systematic literature review of the team coaching research by Traylor et al. (2020) drew together this research and concluded that team coaching is effective at improving team performance. In the following section, a selection of this research is explored in detail.

Carr and Peters (2013) conducted a case study examining two teams that received team coaching. The coaching intervention consisted of a pre-coaching assessment, two-day team offsite sessions and follow-up sessions applying Guttman's (2008) and Hawkins' (2011) team coaching approaches. The teams received between four and six coaching sessions of between 1 and 2 hours each. Participants were interviewed on their experiences of the team coaching interventions. Carr and Peters (2013) found that participants described changes in five key areas following team coaching: improvements in collaboration and productivity; relationships; personal learning and change; communication, participation and impact beyond the team.

Korner et al. (2017) examined the impact of team coaching on teamwork with 71 participants working in rehabilitation clinics. Utilising a robust research design, data was collected before and after the team coaching intervention and compared to a control group who did not receive any team coaching. The team coaching intervention was described as systemic coaching, consisting of between one and six sessions spread between one to 15 months. Korner et al. (2017) found that team coaching had a significant impact on team organisation and the teams' willingness to accept responsibility. However, interestingly, there was no significant impact of team coaching on task accomplishment and cohesion. Korner et al. (2017) explain their findings by highlighting that the significant findings relate to the requests from team members as the desired focus of the team coaching. This observation reflects advice from Jones (2021) who highlights the importance of ensuring that in coaching research, outcome measures are aligned with the clients' goals.

Finally, Lumley (2020) investigated the impact of a team coaching intervention on team emotional intelligence. To test this, four teams were provided with emotional intelligence team coaching and compared to four teams in a control group who did not receive team coaching. The team coaching intervention consisted of four, 4-hour long sessions, spread roughly 1 month apart. The findings indicated that the team coaching intervention had a positive impact on team creativity, team reflexivity, and emotional intelligence. However, there was no positive effect of team coaching on intra-team trust and collaborative culture.

In summary, the limited data in this area suggests that team coaching, when provided by an independent coaching practitioner, can have positive effects on team processes such as team reflexivity, team creativity, team responsibility/autonomy, and relationships as well as a direct impact on team outputs such as productivity and impact beyond the team. This is clearly an area where more research is needed and I will return to this point in the final section of this chapter.

What Do Team Coaches Do and What Happens in Team Coaching?

This is the area where the majority of team coaching research to date has focused. Firstly, I will look at the research on team leader coaching.

Team Leader Coaching

The studies examining what team leader coaches do have demonstrated evidence in three key areas. Team leader coaches model coaching behaviour leading to increased peer coaching; team leader coaching enables reflection in teams who are weak in reflective capability and team leader coaching encourages self-management.

With regards to modelling coaching behaviour, Dimas et al. (2016) employed a cross-sectional research design to survey 471 participants nested in 75 work teams, in order to understand the effects of team leader coaching. Dimas et al. (2016) found that peer coaching had a direct effect on both individual and team outcomes and that the effect of team leader coaching on team performance was mediated by peer coaching. Specifically, peers interact more frequently and intensely with each other than with the leader, therefore, coaching behaviours adopted by peers will have a higher direct impact on team results than when these behaviours are provided by the team leader. This suggests that upskilling team members in relation to coaching skills maybe even more important than training the team leader alone.

With regards to team reflective capability, Buljac-Samardzic and van Woerkom (2015) examined the role of a coaching style of leadership on team outcomes. A longitudinal survey was utilised and administered to 122 teams (with 423 team members and 49 managers). Buljac-Samardzic and van Woerkom (2015) found that teams with coaching managers are more effective but not necessarily more efficient and innovative. Specifically, they found that managerial coaching only leads to more efficiency and greater team innovation when the level of team reflection is low. Buljac-Samardzic and van Woerkom (2015) suggest that their findings may be explained by the fact that

> because coaching managers engage in actions that are time consuming, the potential benefits of coaching might be counterbalanced by a loss of efficiency for teams that are also on their own initiative capable of reflecting on their methods and objectives. For teams that do not engage in reflection on their own initiative, however, this extra time proves to be a worthwhile investment by preventing these teams to waste time caused by for instance unclear values and norms (p. 291).

Finally, Wageman (2001) investigated the influence of a range of factors, including team leader coaching behaviours, on team performance. A total of 33 teams were included in the research, of which, 18 were classified as superb performers and 15 were classified as ineffective teams. Wageman (2001) found that the effect of leader coaching on the quality of group processes (i.e. team working) is mediated by

the effect of leader coaching on self-management. Wageman (2001) also found that ineffective leader team coaching undermines team members' work satisfaction in part through its tendency to reduce team members' self-management. Self-management was measured as consisting of collective responsibility for work outcomes, monitoring own performance and managing own performance. Wageman's (2001) findings regarding the role of leader team coaching and team self-management, can be linked to findings from the literature when coaching is provided by an independent coach explored further next.

Team Coaching by an Independent Coach

The majority of literature on team coaching to date has focused on this area: describing what team coaches do or what happens in team coaching when team coaching is provided by a coach that is independent of the team. I have grouped the key findings from the literature in this area into six themes: team coaches encourage self-management and peer coaching; team coaches need to be adaptable and manage uncertainty; team coaches take an eclectic approach; team coaching requires a systemic focus; team coaches create a containing, trusting secure space for the team and team coaches must work hard to stay independent to the team. The research relate to each of these themes will be discussed next.

Linked to Wageman's (2001) findings that the effects of team leader coaching on the quality of group processes is explained by the effect of team leader coaching on team self-management, the literature on team coaching by an independent coach has also identified that team coaching involves encouraging self-management and specifically peer coaching in the team. For example, in the case study that examined two teams who received team coaching, Carr and Peters (2013) found that team members described, what they termed to be sustainability, as one of the most valuable elements of team coaching. Sustainability was described as sustaining the development beyond the coaching intervention, in other words, the ability of the teams to effectively self-manage. This was described as being achieved through peer coaching as a way of sustaining their new approach to working together. This finding is supported by Hastings and Pennington (2019) who interviewed six experienced external team coaches. Their participants reported that an ultimate aim of team coaching is to encourage the team to build autonomy and accountability, reducing the reliance on the team coaching and instead encouraging peer and self-coaching.

The next area of evidence relating to what happens in team coaching describes how team coaches need to be adaptable and manage uncertainty. Jones et al. (2019) identified in their definition of team coaching, that team coaching requires advanced coaching skills. In particular, the evidence indicates that team coaches must be adaptable, with the ability to manage uncertainty during coaching conversations. For example, Ghosh (2020) conducted six interviews with team coaches in order to explore team coaching engagements. Ghosh (2020) describes how, during team coaching sessions, team coaches are continually making decisions regarding what

the team requires to deepen shared understanding. James et al. (2020) provide an in-depth analysis of a team coaching case study with one team over a 12-month period and highlight the sometimes unpredictable influences between people and teams. Furthermore, James et al. (2020) describe how in a team coaching assignment, we may think we have contracted to work on a specific agenda, yet other issues emerge once the coaching gets underway. Consequently, it is important for the team coach to remain flexible and adaptable when working with the team. Similarly, in Hastings and Pennington's (2019) interviews with six experienced team coaches, they report how team coaching deals with complex situations and that team coaches need to be adaptable to this complexity. Finally, Hauser (2014) interviewed eight team coaches and summarises how the findings from this study suggest that team coaches engage in shapeshifting. Hauser (2014) suggests that the construct of shapeshifting characterises the team coaches' ability to shift or change at will, his or her shape or form. Specifically how the coach's action at any moment during the coaching engagement is influenced and shifts in response to the contextual complexity of the team.

Related to the need to be adaptable and manage uncertainty, are the findings that highlight how team coaches take an eclectic approach (Dassen, 2015; Ghosh, 2020; Hastings & Pennington, 2019; James et al., 2020). For example, Hastings and Pennington's (2019) interviews with experienced coaches highlighted how coaches reported an eclectic approach when team coaching, drawing on elements of facilitation, as required to suit the needs of the team. Similarly, Ghosh (2020) reports how team coaches do not adopt one theory or approach, instead, it is necessary to work with multiple coaching theories and philosophies. This need to work eclectically potentially highlights the complexity of team coaching and indicates how team coaches need to be free to draw on a range of approaches in order to work with this complexity.

The evidence base reflects the requirement for team coaches to consider the team to be a system (Jones et al., 2019). For example, the case study of a 12-month coaching intervention by James et al. (2020) describes how the team was viewed as part of an ecosystem. In particular, how the team is situated within a wider context and how issues from outside the team can infiltrate the team coaching discussions. Similarly, the coaches interviewed by Hastings and Pennington (2019) described how they adopted an underlying systemic or systems-based focus in their team coaching. Finally, Hauser's (2014) interviews with experienced coaches also highlighted how the effect of coaching interacting elements of the system (i.e. interrelationships and the impact of the team as a subsystem) was greater than coaching only one part of the system (such as an individual team member).

An important focus in the team coaching research, similar to the one-to-one coaching research, has been in relation to creating trust. Potentially the most influential piece of work here is Wotruba's (2016) interview study with six team coaches on their views of the importance of the coaching relationship when coaching teams. This research highlights the importance of trust in team coaching and focuses on some of the ways in which trust can be built. For example, reciprocal information sharing was named as one method by which a relationship could be built between

individual clients and the coach during the initial stages of the team coaching intervention. The importance of providing support to the team, particularly during the early stages, was again seen as essential to forming trust and for creating the right conditions for which team members may be open to challenge from the coach. The team coaches described how securing trust from the team gave them permission to challenge teams on ineffective ways of working. Wotruba (2016) referred to the importance of team coaches creating a safe space in the coaching engagement and Carr and Peters' (2013) case study of two leadership teams who had received team coaching, found that team members reported appreciating the coach's ability to create safety. Similarly, Dassen (2015), who provides a multiple case study to understand the use of drama techniques in team coaching, highlights that effective team coaches are able to create a holding space which can contain both their own and the group anxieties.

Related to the role of the team coach in building trust in the coaching relationship and providing a safe, containing space, is the importance of staying independent to the team. Wotruba (2016) describes how while it is essential for the team coach to connect with the team, they must be careful that they do not connect too closely so that they cannot remain impartial and outside of the team dynamic. Indeed, an essential element of ensuring the trust between the coach and the team is not broken, is that the coach is seen as a neutral observer with no personal agenda. A similar point was made by Dassen (2015) who describes a challenge for team coaches is the contagiousness of group dynamics, posing the risk that team coaches may get pulled into the existing dynamic of the team being coached: 'At moments when tension and anxiety were high, team coaches felt that teams were making an implicit but strong demand on them to "play along" in this dynamic, rather than looking at its nature and root' (p. 53). This need to connect yet remain outside of the team dynamics further highlights the complexities of team coaching described by Jones et al. (2019).

Conclusion and Directions for Future Research

The evidence base regarding team coaching has begun to build gradually in recent years. The research to date can be grouped into two areas: team leader as coach and team coaching provided by the independent practitioner. This research includes some exploration of the effectiveness of team coaching; however, the majority of research in this field has tended to focus on what happens in team coaching. While this is an important avenue of research, particularly in terms of identifying what team coaches do and consequently the competencies required for team coaching, this tells us very little as to the efficacy of this development method. Consequently, I propose that future research in the field of team coaching should seek to build on this initial evidence base in order to address three questions:

1. *Does team coaching 'work'?*

   The first key area to be addressed is 'does team coaching work?' Research in this area should seek to isolate the impact of team coaching on outcomes that matter to teams such as team performance, team goal achievement, team satisfaction and team relationships. I propose that to adequately address a research question such as this, experimental research designs will be required in order to compare team level outcomes before and after team coaching against alternative team development (such as team building or team training) and a control group who receive no intervention.

2. *When is team coaching appropriate?*

   Once we have a clearer understanding of the general effectiveness of team coaching, research can begin to explore the topic of team coaching effectiveness in greater detail. For example, what are the boundary conditions of team coaching effectiveness? Is team coaching more or less effective at certain stages in a team's life cycle? Or for certain types of work teams? Is team coaching more effective for certain outcomes? For example, can team coaching directly affect team relationships which in turn can enhance team performance or is there a direct impact of team coaching on team performance? By exploring questions such as these, we can start to build a clearer understanding of when and for whom team coaching is appropriate. Once again, experimental designs would appropriately address questions such as these.

3. *What are the 'key ingredients' in team coaching?*

   The evidence base to date has identified a number of themes regarding what happens in team coaching which I have outlined in this chapter. The next step in team coaching research would be to examine the differential impact of these in relation to outcomes from team coaching. For example, the importance for team coaches to adopt an eclectic approach in team coaching has been highlighted; however, what exactly is the impact of this eclectic approach on the coaching conversation and outcomes from team coaching? How does an eclectic approach manifest in practice? Research questions such as these could be effectively explored utilising observation studies of team coaching engagements in order to provide an in-depth understanding of the actions of team coaches to a variety of team coaching scenarios and explore these actions in relation to clients reactions and outcomes from team coaching.

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Transference and Countertransference and Their Significance for Coaching

Astrid Schreyögg

A Practical Example

Amelia, a 35-year-old manager in the upscale gastronomy sector, had to manage a total of 30 people. Female and male were almost at equal shares. On a rather peripheral controversy, a long-standing employee complained indignantly to her boss: "You always forgive all sorts of troubles with men, but with us women there is never any mercy." Amelia was deeply affected, because she had previously always striven to achieve high-quality leadership and to spread her sympathies as evenly as possible among all employees. But this proved to be by no means easy in the usual stress of the business. For this reason, Amelia had taken advantage of coaching at large intervals, but still regularly. This incident worried her for days, which is why she decided to address it in coaching. There she reported on the accusation of the employee in a mixture of consternation and an attempt to justify herself. In the coaching situation, she was now asked to search her previous professional life for striking differences between women and men. In fact, she noticed that she usually judged younger men somewhat more generously, while she generally applied stricter standards to women—as she did to herself. Since the coach had already experienced a similar inclination in himself, he suggested looking for analogies in the family biography. Amelia's "scales fell from her eyes." "Oh yes," she said, "I had two brothers, one of whom died unexpectedly at baby age. As a result, the other one was always considered particularly worthy of protection. And I, as a good big sister, was naturally eager to make sure that no harm came to him." Now she remembered a multitude of similar events, and it became increasingly clear to her that the staff member was by no means wrong with her reproach. In the period that followed, she was able to reflect her "compulsion to be mild," as she said, more and more

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effectively, and as a result, she was able to interact with all her employees more evenly than before.

Scientifically Based Theories of Transference and Countertransference

The constructs "transference" and "countertransference" are specific interaction phenomena. The conceptual basis for understanding them is found in approaches to psychoanalysis. From their concepts, indications can be derived as to how interactive complications of the clients with their social environment can be mentally classified. In addition, hints can be derived as to how coaches can professionally use their affection by clients in the sense of a "container."

The Basic Theoretical Pattern of Transference

Freud (1912) observed already in his hypnotherapeutic work that especially female patients developed inappropriately intense feelings of love or hate toward him during the course of therapy. He described these feelings as a reappearance of emotions and fantasies toward former relationship partners, which he then called "transferences." On the background of his libido-theoretical model of development, he often specified transferences as a revival of Oedipal aspirations vis-à-vis parental figures. In therapeutic interaction, early childhood relationship experiences with all their positive and negative emotional components toward the therapist should be reactivated in a targeted manner. Freud later postulated that transference is a universal phenomenon that can be more or less clearly updated in any interpersonal relationship (Thomä & Kächele, 2006). As a projective phenomenon, it is also considered in the "Social Perception" of US-American social psychology (Zebrowitz, 1990) as the basis of all perception of the person. Thus, "transference" outlines a triadic phenomenon: internal processes resulting from an earlier, often even early childhood relationship are revived by one interaction partner in relation to a new interaction partner.

What was historically first described as a problematic side effect of therapeutic treatment, Freud used as a crucial element of psychotherapy. He developed a paradoxical strategy: he defined the pathological relationship of the patient, which seemingly opposes the symptomatic success of treatment, as the core of analytical work. His methodology aimed at transforming the client's "original neurosis," i.e., an obsessive-compulsive symptomatology, into a "transference neurosis." This means that the "pathological" feelings of origin toward former relationship partners (Hämmerling-Balzert, 1978) should be encountered again in the analytical situation—now toward the analyst.

Transference cannot be produced; it can only be consciously encouraged by the analytical setting. Lying on the couch, free association in the classic, analytical setting only generates intensive willingness in the patient to update childhood relationship experiences (Thomä & Kächele, 2006). At the same time, the so-called therapeutic "abstinence" of the analyst, i.e., his emphasized restraint in gestures, facial expressions, language, has the effect that they can be considered as a projection screen for various transferences, i.e., father, mother, siblings, etc.

Modernized Variants of Transference

Due to further developments in psychoanalysis, the classical transference concept was also subject to modifications. These can be described in three directions:

- The concept of "transference neurosis" has been questioned.
- Transference was also interpreted in terms of role theory. In this way, the concept of transference could even be applied to the whole of life.
- In addition to the classical figure of thought as a triadic pattern of relationships, transference is today often conceived as a dyadic phenomenon. In this way, the classical pattern could be conceptually extended as "narcissistic transference" or "narcissistic projection."

1. Modern authors (e.g., Thomä & Kächele, 2006) no longer see the creation of a transference neurosis at the center of treatment. Here, the current encounter as a "here and now relationship" comes to the fore (e.g., Greenson, 2007/1967; Kernberg, 1988). This position is significant from an anthropological point of view because transferences are now interpreted less as inner-psychic phenomena of clients, but as mutually generated circular phenomena. Thus, we find here an approximation to the paradigm of circularity; see, e.g., *George Herbert Mead* (1973). On a methodological level, this means that the therapist or counselor enters into a more authentic relationship with the client. According to this position, every practitioner, including the coaches who generate special transferences from their clients, must now ask themselves to what extent they have contributed to the intensification of transferences through their methodology or their "social dramatization" (*Steyrer,* 1995).

2. Especially Horst-Eberhard Richter (1969) and his descendants interpreted the phenomenon in a role-theoretical way. Transference is understood here as a mutual attribution phenomenon. The basic thought builds on the premise that persons, according to their previous relationship experiences, bring expectations to another person and then interact in the light of these expectations. *Richter* describes transferences as "confusion" between historical and current persons. This interpretation enabled Richter to comprehensively expand the transference concept. Transference can now be interpreted as a universal interpersonal phenomenon that can emanate from any interaction partner. Chen and Andersen

(1999) could prove this empirically. In contrast to classical authors, Richter devotes a great deal of attention to the question of what kind of role expectations of the "higher-rankings"—such as parents, teachers, and superiors—address "lower-ranking" interaction partners. He describes, for example, how parents use their children as "substitutes" for their own parents, siblings, even partners. Patterns of experience relevant to transference now appear as patterns that can be formed throughout life. Through role-theoretical interpretation, it is possible to interpret transferences as circular interpersonal phenomena. Similar to the Mead school (1973) Richter describes how mutual behavioral control between two interaction partners happens through transferences.

3. An important addition to the classical transference concept has been introduced under the term "narcissistic transference." These are projective phenomena toward other people, conceived as dyadic constellations. In these approaches, it is postulated that people project their own split personality parts onto others. Kohut (1973) conceived this form of transfer on the background of a specific development model. In contrast to classical analytical development models, this author postulates two parallel lines of development: one he describes in the sense of Freud as a development from objectless narcissistic stages to relational stages, i.e., oral, anal, and oedipal stages. At the same time, he sees a development of the "self" from archaic to mature narcissism. On the background of this concept, all degrees of severity of narcissism can be distinguished. Thus, unlike in classical literature (e.g., Fenichel, 1932/2005), Kohut's term "narcissistic neuroses" is by no means reserved for psychotics and borderline patients alone, but also applies to persons who, while otherwise well integrated into the person, show a disturbed self-part. Kohut was able to show that narcissism can also result from later stages of development, and that mild degrees of narcissistic disorders can even be dealt with well using psychoanalysis. Richter (1969), similar to Kohut, distinguishes a type of transference from the conventionally described transferences, which he calls "narcissistic projection." Unlike Kohut, however, he does not relate them exclusively to early childhood stages, but to the whole of life. He describes narcissistic projections as general shifts of self-perception to other people. He distinguishes three forms: the displacement of an idealized self-part, the displacement of a negative self-part, and the definition of the other as one's self-image. We encounter most frequently shifts of negative self-parts. The addiction therapist, who sharply rejects his own addictive tendencies in himself, then attacks them in the person of the patients. This often leads to overt or covert sadism (Rost, 1987).

The Basic Theoretical Pattern of Countertransference

While transference is always described as a patient trait in classical psychoanalysis, "countertransference" is usually defined as a characteristic of the therapist (Beckmann, 1978). Following Freud, countertransference is understood as the

analyst's unconscious reaction to the patient's transference. On the background of their own unprocessed conflicts from early childhood stages, which analysts must fend off, they are prepared to accept or fight the definition assigned to them by transfer as punishing father, overprotective mother, etc. Their developmental deficits obscured this ability to recognize the relationship offered by the client as a transference and to reflect on it.

Freud (1912) advised analysts to overcome their willingness to counter-transmit, since these are their own unresolved conflicts. They should eliminate them through self-therapy, i.e., through their "training analysis." Freud thus regarded countertransference exclusively as a disturbing factor. In the sense of the "high-ranking analyst ideal" (Peters, 1977, p. 55) of never developing countertransference, "the pioneers of psychoanalysis were rather avoiding this phenomenon."

Very problematic effects of countertransference have been reported during the 1990s in connection with sexual abuse of their clients by psychotherapists (Pope & Bouhoutsos, 1992 et al.). Here, several female authors described that the infatuation of female clients with their male psychotherapists, which frequently occurs in the course of psychotherapy, was not interpreted by the male psychotherapists as a transference, and thus as a re-enactment of childhood infatuation.

Modernized Variants of Countertransference

Younger generations of analysts took a critical look at the classical countertransference position, they modified and differentiated the approach considerably. Paula Heimann (1950) opened the debate and pointed out that the countertransference of the analyst is an indispensable condition in analytical work. Only through his own inner countertransference can the analyst grasp the inner processes of the client and thus also his transferences. Under the term "holistic countertransference" new perspectives of countertransference have since developed.

1. Beckmann (1978), a descendant of Richter, interpreted the countertransference in terms of role theory: The client develops a role definition of the analyst against the background of their historical experiences, which the latter experiences inwardly as a role offer or countertransference. The analyst can only grasp the patients' transference if they are willing to perceive this role assignment or countertransference inwardly and then consciously analyzes it in relation to the patient. From this perspective, countertransference is "a normal reaction to transference and thus a component of understanding and explanation" (Beckmann, 1978, p. 1243). According to Beckmann, countertransference is therefore of primary importance for the detection of transference phenomena. He further differentiates the phenomenon of "countertransference" by identifying three groups of countertransference factors from interviews with psychoanalysts:

   - At first, they consist in *empathic understanding*. Without this aspect of countertransference, analyst cannot capture client transferences. They must

emotionally absorb the client's role expectations ascribed to them to be able to analyze and interpret them.

- Countertransference also consists of simple *emotional reactions* to clients, which analysts activate as a human being.
- The third and problematic part of countertransference is the *"residual neurosis"* of the analyst after their training. This includes habitual, personality-specific emotional reactions of the analyst to certain clients, client groups, etc. They are not perceived by themselves and are in principle "to be understood as normal human reaction" (ibid.). However, they often have a disturbing effect on professional action processes. For this reason, for the first patient work, the analyst should engage in "control analysis," i.e., a kind of supervision, in which they can reflect on their first therapy attempts with an experienced colleague with all their personal implications.

2. The broadest position today is certainly held by Kernberg (1983). He also understands transference and countertransference as interactive role phenomena, which can emanate from both partners alternately, i.e., in the sense of transference as *action* and countertransference as *reaction*. Furthermore, he sees them as being determined by specifics of the social system in which each individual interaction partner and the current interaction are embedded. And it even includes objectively justified, i.e., non-pathological emotional reactions of the interaction partners in its terminology. He then interprets countertransference as the totality of all emotional reactions of the analyst to the patient in the treatment situation. These emotional reactions include conscious and unconscious reactions of the analyst to the patient. They contain transferences as well as realistic needs and neurotic elements.

3. Following Winnicott (1947) Kernberg even postulated "objective countertransference." These are "natural" reactions of analysts to extreme behavior of patients, that they are frightened by sadistic perversions, for example. And following Frieda Fromm-Reichmann (1950), Kernberg also included institutional phenomena in his conception. Therapist are influenced in their professional actions by professional standards, status, group membership etc. The author concludes that countertransference, as a whole is ultimately the therapist's most important diagnostic tool.

4. Bion (1990) represented such positions in an emotionally condensed way under the term "container-contained." He described an optimal posture of the analyst as "reverie," i.e., increased attention, in which he allows all the patient's actions and emotions to have an intensive effect on him. These impressions and sensations should "rumble" in him for some time to then generate hypotheses and suggestions for further interventions. This concept even gives countertransference a central methodological significance in therapy and counseling.

5. Kächele and Strauss (2000) describe that since the 1950s, countertransference has been thoroughly empirically researched in at least five phases. Luborsky et al. (1958) was initially concerned with how countertransference impedes psychotherapy. In 1974, for example, Beckmann used disposable discs in studies to

experimentally determine how countertransferences of prospective psychotherapists correspond to their personality traits (after the Giessen test). Later, own instruments for measuring countertransference were developed, such as the Countertransference Factors Inventory (CFI) by Van Wagenor et al. (1991). Especially the Countertransference Questionnaire (Betan et al., 2005) serves today as a valid and reliable instrument to determine how the personal pathology of the patient corresponds to specific countertransference willingness on the part of the therapist.

The Importance of Transference and Countertransference in Coaching

Some coaches panic when they are told that psychoanalytic concepts can be important for their work, because they place any preoccupation with the unconscious in the field of psychotherapy. "Psychoanalytic information" is today one of the tools of a coach's trade (Allcorn, 2006). Moreover, they fail to recognize that dealing with psychoanalytical questions is part of basic social science education. For Freud's psychoanalysis contributed to a general expansion of thinking in the enlightened modern age. Psychoanalytic patterns of interpretation are therefore significant beyond psychotherapy and psychology. They opened new spaces of thought and experience for many philosophers, sociologists, and artists.

When dealing with psychoanalytical concepts, however, it is always important to consider what is appropriate and what is not appropriate in coaching.

- When I speak of psychoanalytic knowledge here, I mean primarily the psychoanalytic theory building, less the psychoanalytic concept of action, possibly with the promotion or even treatment of a transference neurosis.
- Accordingly, it is absurd for a coach to behave in a markedly emotionally neutral, i.e., therapeutically abstinent, manner or to try to create a transference neurosis through other forms of social dramatization.

The central theme of a coaching session remains the preoccupation with the client's professional issues. Thus, coaching cannot be about methodically accentuating the relationship between coach and client. Rather, the relationship should be appropriately authentic, yet the way in which the client makes contact and forms the relationship can be a diagnostically important indication of the client's usual form of interaction—whether favorable or unfavorable.

In classical analytical writings, however, negative transferences are mostly spoken of, but de facto we find positive transferences much more often, especially in psychotherapeutic or counseling situations. From the mere fact that a client entrusts themselves to the analyst, coach, or consultant for a certain period, it can be concluded that this usually happens based on positive transfers. Especially in coaching processes, which are usually much shorter than psychotherapeutic

treatments and tend to take place with a "normally neurotic" clientele, negative transferences rarely develop. Otherwise, a client would quickly terminate the employment contract. In other words, for coaching, a mutually positive transfer is virtually indispensable.

Coaching is often about training and sharpening the client's view beyond the obvious, easily accessible, and also for the underlying, that which can only be accessed through interpretation. Our special value as coaches is that we, as dialogue partners, are able to detect more than our client, that we can also open up strange human subtexts and thus help him to expand his mental horizons and options for action.

Typical applications of the transference concept often arise in the handling of interaction conflicts (Schreyögg, 2011, p. 63). In cases where clients report particularly vehemently about negative experiences with interaction partners, superiors, colleagues, or subordinates, the coach can form the hypothesis that it is a negative transference. He can then ask: "Do you know such feelings? Is there someone you've experienced similar feelings or sensations towards?" If the client reports similar emotions to a previous person, the coach may suggest that the relationship be examined more closely. For this purpose, it is worthwhile to let the client picture the previous person on an empty chair and ask the client to tell the experience of this person in typical situations. Subsequently, an imaginative role reversal with this person is often useful, because in this way the experience is usually put into perspective (Schreyögg, 2004). For the majority of clients, becoming aware of the transference as a projective phenomenon is enough to achieve more serenity. If the client perceives the transference as "confusion," they can view their experience of the person in question from a metaphorical perspective and can usually rationally control their behavior toward them again.

In some other cases, however, the transfer is so deeply engraved that it requires more precise processing. Then the coach will suggest reversing the "confusion" as far as possible. The following procedure has proven to be successful: the coach asks the client to imagine the current problem person on an empty chair and the former problem partner on a second chair next to it. Afterward, the coach asks the participants one after the other first to explore the similarity between the two persons, and then the differences in as many facets as possible. In many cases, this results in a relatively lasting insight, which at least leads to increased attentiveness in the interaction in question.

However, the coach may also be affected by such phenomena. With clients who appear to us to be particularly kind, particularly qualified, etc., we are often in danger of seeing them as a reflection of ourselves. If these then suddenly show weaknesses, we are inclined to deny them or be "deeply" disappointed. And at some clients we encounter sides that we ourselves accept only with difficulty or not at all. Such an encounter can then lead to an exaggerated strictness in confrontations or impatience in dealing with the client. And some other clients can be extremely sympathetic or extremely unsympathetic to us at first glance, so that we should think of our own transference to siblings or even parents. Then the relationship with this client must be handled with particular care so as not to transmit "undigested" information.

Open Questions

People who have never met psychoanalytical thought often wonder whether all these phenomena are empirically proven. It can be said that, as mentioned above, the phenomena have been increasingly empirically proven, especially in the Anglo-American region. Several of these phenomena have recently also been proven by neuropsychology (e.g., Bauer, 2005). However, the user of psychoanalytical concepts remains dependent on their own interpretation competence, which they validate in the best case in dialogue with their client. For this reason, it is recommended that the ability to interpret is also promoted in coaching training courses.

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Transformative Learning and Its Relevance to Coaching

Beth Fisher-Yoshida and Ria Yoshida

Introduction

The focus of this chapter is on the transformational capabilities inherent in a successful coaching engagement. Coaches assist clients to develop the capacity to gain new perspectives about themselves, their situations, and approaches they use to engage others. New perspectives allow us to look at our communication, behavioral patterns, and dynamics from a meta-perspective. In other words, to see our actions go from first person to third person orientation. We become the object rather than subject of the interaction.

The shift to third person object can provide new insights into our interactions. This in turn leads to expanded meanings from our relationships. As humans, we understand our relationships by how they connect to our lives and wellbeing. We call this a *meaning making process*. The more frames of reference we include in our interpretive process, the more well rounded the information with which we have to work. Here is where the potential for transformation is present. New frameworks and subsequent differences in our meaning making are what are altered. This develops new awareness about why interactions and results happen the way they do. We gain ways to create and "live into" a different way of engaging to bring about a different set of results. When our mindsets about ourselves shift, the narrative we have of self and others changes, influencing our identities.

We will introduce a scenario of an actual coaching engagement. While the persons and organization will not be identified, you may find this scenario common.

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The type of issues and organizational dynamics may seem familiar because they incorporate characteristics of many workplaces. We will discuss aspects of coaching that are particularly relevant to this case. We will then walk through some of the processes used by "taking a communication perspective," through the use of *Coordinated Management of Meaning* (CMM) (Pearce, 2007), to transform points of view and gain deeper insights into self, other, and relationship. This will be further explored through the lens of transformative learning (Mezirow, 2000). We will see what could change in the spirit of having the client be more successful in the workplace and in her life relationships. We will conclude with some recommendations.

Coaching Scenario

Emily was a Director of Marketing on the Executive Management team of a large non-profit organization, which she held for 6 months. She had been with the organization for 3 years prior as Assistant Director of Marketing. Emily had a shaky beginning because of the difficult working relationship with the former Director of Marketing, Mike, who had very tight control over the work Emily was assigned. The organization was not satisfied with Mike's performance and reassigned some of his responsibilities to Emily. This transition was not smooth, as Mike did not share with Emily what had already been done and what still needed to be done. The reporting lines were not made clear as the Executive Director, Teresa, did not address these changes nor clarify roles and responsibilities. The marketing department felt uncomfortable with this team dynamic.

Emily would go to Teresa and Human Resources to ask for support. She wanted Teresa to be proactive and let Mike go since he was not fulfilling his responsibilities. Teresa can be described as a "no nonsense" person, very task-oriented, made lists of things to be done and checked them off as they were completed. Teresa believed the situation between Emily and Mike should be handled between them and did not get involved.

Eight months later Teresa addressed the situation and let Mike go. Emily now had sole responsibility for managing the entire marketing team and workload. Emily was still reeling from the difficulty of the previous 3 years working under and then alongside Mike and could not appreciate the promotion. Emily felt betrayed by Teresa and Human Resources because they did not act sooner. It was difficult for Emily to move forward because she became emotional when engaging with Teresa. The more emotional Emily became, the more Teresa pulled back. This is when Teresa sought a coach for Emily.

When I first met Emily she was guarded and reluctant to share information. Emily thought she was being referred for coaching because she assumed Teresa's opinion of her was that she was not competent enough to do her job well. The framing of the coaching was to support Emily in her transition to her new role with a fuller range of

responsibilities, especially since she did not get support earlier in her tenure with the organization.

Emily was a perfect candidate for coaching. She was bright, dedicated, experienced and the organization believed she was worth investing in because they valued her current and potential contributions. Teresa wanted Emily to succeed; however, Emily did not feel that Teresa protected her from others in the organization including Emily's peers from different departments. According to Emily, marketing was one of the most valuable departments in the organization and she had to constantly defend her recommendations as she felt resistance from her peers. Emily was exceedingly frustrated from these working conditions, yet she was expected to meet her goals. Emily wondered aloud why others do not "get it?"

As Emily relayed her work setting, her contentious relationships with her peers and the Executive Director, it struck me that she was very good at seeing the world from her marketing lens. She was not as good at seeing the world from the viewpoints of her peers or the Executive Director. This limited her ability to move past the corner she was boxing herself in. Emily was unable to advance her working relationships because she did not understand the priorities of those she needed to work with.

Coaching for Performance Improvement

Coaching is a particular practice of training and development to set personal and or professional goals. The coach and client engage in an exploration of goal setting and creating action plans to accomplish specific milestones along the way. This can vary in degrees of formality and context, from private practice to within a work setting.

Effective coaches are equipped with a set of core competencies. These are determined according to the organization or institutions educating the coach, although there is much overlap amongst these sources. According to Brannick et al. (2007) competencies consist of four components: knowledge, skills, abilities, and other types of information (KSAO). Knowledge includes factual information derived from concepts and theories that can be learned in formal and informal settings. Skills, on the other hand, develop through practice and performing specific tasks. Abilities are innate talents with which we are born and can nurture, while other types of information can include values, beliefs, and personality style (Brannick and Levine 2006, as cited in Blumberg, 2014).

These competencies help set a healthy professional coaching relationship to foster transformational growth for the client. Change is complex and challenging to both endure and facilitate. A professional coach guiding the transformational process can push clients beyond the tipping point and towards their desired results. This is why it is important that coaches are trained well and adhere to high ethical standards. At the same time, they are building capacities in the client. Clients gain skills that enable them to continue their transformation and growth, sustain the changes they have

reached, and continue to receive support from coaches moving forward, as needed, to reach even newer levels.

Role of Transformative Learning

Jack Mezirow (2000) was the first person to coin the phrase *transformative learning*. It came about as a result of his research working with women returning to school who attended community college after having worked and started families. He was struck by what happened to these mid-life/mid-career students because they were not only gaining new academic knowledge, but were also gaining new knowledge about themselves and how they saw the world (Mezirow, 2000). They were adjusting their perspectives, assumptions, how they saw and understood the world as needed to better navigate their new paradigm. These are the foundations Mezirow established for transformative learning theory.

This process is not necessarily a smooth one. These shifts in perspective come about after what Mezirow coined a *disorienting dilemma*, in which we have a cognitive reaction because we are now seeing things as we had not previously seen them. This causes our expectations about how things should be to be challenged. This cognitive shift stimulates an emotional response due to the strength of our need to establish new understandings of the world we thought we once knew. Our previously held assumptions are being challenged and we need to critically reflect on what this means to our sense of self, identity, how we connect with others and the world around us (Brookfield, 2011).

The steps of critical reflection involve a process and not a one-time event or outcome. They are addressed at different levels of the assumptions we hold and the changes we experience. These assumptions and reactions to the disorienting dilemma can be addressed through a series of questions that a person uses on his/her own or with the support of a coach. An example of these questions can be: What is the response I expected to have? What factors led to me expecting this response? How did I expect the other person to respond? What factors led to me expecting this response? Brookfield (1987) lists five qualities of his *theories in use* of the process of critical thinking and they are: (1) it is person-specific especially regarding a person's personality and cultural background; (2) emotions are central and can involve a host of negative ones, such as fear and anxiety to positive ones, such as relief and joy; (3) there are a combination of intrinsic and extrinsic motivations for engaging in critical thinking; (4) our breakthroughs are often unscripted and unplanned although we are hoping for new insights; and (5) we benefit from support of peers as it adds legitimacy to our experiences.

The coaching process calls for the coach to guide the client through this transitional shift with new understandings of previously held assumptions. By the coach supporting the client to engage in critical reflection, the client is now able to make new meanings of his or her life as an act of creating possibility for learner empowerment (Cranton, 2006). Critical self-reflection can be stimulated through the use of

question prompts that work to make implicit assumptions the client had been living with explicit. "The educator who fosters transformative learning has a moral responsibility to provide and arrange for support," which means "to do everything we can to ensure that people are able to negotiate any difficulties they may encounter" (Cranton, 2006, p. 160). The role of coach in here can be substituted for educator.

Subject-Object Shift

In moving from *subject* to *object*, the transformative learning process of coaching allows the client to become aware of and discern what they had been taking for granted (unconscious assumptions) without conscious awareness. We are creatures of habit and our brains are designed to process information subconsciously. The coaching process is a method to allow the subconscious to become conscious, of making implicit assumptions explicit. It aids us to look at our patterns of behavior from a third person viewpoint and question why we are doing what we are doing, so we can better align our actions with our desired results.

However, the paths in which we choose to reach these desired results have unintended consequences. When we are directly involved in the decision-making process from a first person perspective, it is difficult to notice side effects. The value of taking a third person perspective by viewing our behavioral patterns as objects to our subject in a guided conversation with a coach provides opportunities for metamorphosis. Coaches can ask difficult questions to evoke deep reflections. Through an iterative process between the coach asking questions, the client responding, and the coach probing further, shifts in disposition can occur.

In many cases, clients seek coaches because they are stuck and want guidance. In the introduction we mentioned taking a communication perspective. We use the theory and practice of *Coordinated Management of Meaning* (CMM) to do this. CMM allows us to shift our perspective from the micro view (looking *through* communication to end goal) to the macro view (looking *at* communication). This echoes the shift from subject to object, as we are able to notice our communication patterns, which determine the relationship dynamics we create through these patterns. When we shift our communication to being the object, we take ourselves outside of the communication dynamics in which we are cognitively, emotionally, and physically engaged, and are able to view the patterns we are creating from a meta-perspective.

Robert Kegan and Lisa Lahey (2009) discuss this aspect of individual and collective transformation in their book *Immunity to Change*. One excerpt here highlights how this shift from subject to object is necessary to have a deeper understanding of the relationship dynamics we are creating.

"A way of knowing becomes more complex when it is able to *look at* what before it could only *look through*. In other words, our way of knowing becomes more complex when we create a bigger system that incorporates and expands on our previous system. This means that if we want to increase mental complexity, we need

to move aspects of our meaning-making from subject to object, to alter our mindset so that a way of knowing or making meaning becomes a kind of 'tool' that *we have* (and can control or use) rather than something that *has us* (and therefore controls and uses us)" (Kegan and Lahey, 2009, p. 51).

This outside posture from a meta perch can allow the person being coached to view his or her behavioral patterns more emotionally detached, clearing some of the emotionally charged blinders. The person would then assess whether the patterns and relationship dynamics they are creating through their communication and actions are in alignment with the goals they have identified. If it is in alignment, then they can move on to something else. If it is not in alignment, they have an opportunity for insight to change how and what they are doing to get their desired results.

Use of Critical Self-Reflection

When we have disorienting dilemmas there are a variety of ways in which we can respond to them. Stephen Brookfield (2011) discusses the basic process of critical thinking to examine this dilemma as a four-step process: First, we need to identify the assumptions we carry that have been framing our meaning making and deciding our actions. Second, we need to explore the validity of these assumptions and whether they are even accurate. Next, we examine our thinking from multiple vantage points, such as intellectually, personally, and contextually. Finally, with this new information we can take more informed actions. Brookfield (2011) uses a typology of three different kinds of assumptions that are uncovered through this critical thinking process: *paradigmatic*, *prescriptive,* and *causal*.

Paradigmatic assumptions are the most challenging to uncover because they are embedded in the frames we use to see and understand the world. When paradigmatic assumptions are challenged or uncovered a disorienting dilemma manifests. This happens because these types of assumptions are a foundational part of our core beliefs and when challenged, our entire belief system is challenged as well. An example of a paradigmatic assumption is our socialized beliefs about the roles of managers and their direct reports. We may believe that our manager is there to guide us, help us develop our career, and support us when we need assistance. We have an implicit contract and in this our responsibility is to do the work assigned effectively and in a timely manner. If we do not feel supported or nurtured, yet have upheld our end of the bargain, and instead face what we consider a hostile work environment, we can feel betrayed. This betrayal can lead to a disorienting dilemma.

Prescriptive assumptions, as extensions of paradigmatic assumptions, are what we think should happen in any given position. These are the assumptions that are aligned with our moral beliefs of what ought to or ought not to happen (Pearce, 2007). Continuing on with our example, a prescriptive assumption might be that our manager comes to our defense and enforces the cooperation we expect and need

from our colleagues. This is because of our paradigmatic belief that our managers are in the role of being our protectors, so if it does not occur, we feel betrayed.

The third type of assumption, causal, is the easiest to uncover. These are grounded in the way we think the world works (Brookfield, 2011). If X happens, then Y follows. If Y does not follow, then this type of assumption is challenged. An example of a causal assumption is that when we request an item from our colleagues they will respond immediately. We assume they place the same or a similar level of importance on our request and comply. When they do not, we feel confused and blame them for not being team players. If we reflect on this expectation, we will realize we held this causal assumption. Our assumptions have a variety of sources, many based on the cultural influences and values we are socialized into from a young age that further develop as we mature (Fisher-Yoshida & Yoshida, 2015).

In a coaching relationship, the coach can ask questions to prompt clients to question their held assumptions. As discussed earlier, the coach is there to support the client through this process. In the case of uncovering paradigmatic or prescriptive assumptions, strong emotional reactions usually occur because a person's core beliefs and way of understanding the world are being questioned. This is part of the transformative process (Fisher-Yoshida, 2012). As the client becomes more secure in managing this critically reflective process, the client can conduct this process on his or her own. It is useful for the coach and client to determine prompts that will help the client through the process in an effective way to best fit that client's needs.

Transformational Coaching

There are many levels and areas to focus on in a coaching agreement. The degree to which a person changes depends on the depth and permanence of the change. For example, a person might change a behavior as a result of a new awareness or attitude shift and that change may be applicable to specific situations (Fisher-Yoshida, 2000). However, perspective changes involve a deeper paradigm shift as a result of a disorienting dilemma and critical reflection on assumptions that call upon long-term transformations. Transformational change happens from life circumstances as well as coaching when a process of critical reflection is employed.

Transformational coaching incorporates adult learning principles based on the core six assumptions of adult learning described by Malcolm Knowles (Wildflower, 2011). These include:

1. Learning must be relevant and goal oriented because adults learn best when they know why they are learning.
2. Adults learn best when they are self-directing and in control of their learning because they have a formed self-concept and identity of who they are—respecting the individuality of the adult.
3. Adults come with life experiences they can use to reflect on and learn from.

4. Adults come to learning when they need it and use it to solve real life problems.
5. Adults prefer practical application focused on life, tasks, and or problems rather than subject or content centered.
6. Adults are motivated.

(Wildflower, 2011, p. 74).

Roles in Coaching

The coach will take on many roles depending on the client's agenda for the session. One of the main theories on supportive coach behavior is unconditional positive regard for the client (Rogers, 1980). Clients may not have the same expertise as the coach; however, they are the experts of their lives. Therefore, coaches honor clients by helping them set their agenda for the sessions with overarching goals to reach. Clients are not "patients" as that would set the stage of the coach-client relationship within the framing of the medical model as if the client is "ill" seeking remedy to become healthy. In a coaching relationship we do not consider the client to be ill. Coaches focus on supporting clients in moving forward constructively. This will be achieved through a variety of means depending on the type of coaching, the coach, the client, and the reason for the coaching.

Values and Levels of Importance

To expand Emily's point of view to include the views of others, we worked together using concepts and models from the *Coordinated Management of Meaning* (CMM). CMM posits that our relationships and social worlds are made in communication. The better our communication, the better we make our social worlds (Fisher-Yoshida, 2012). A social world is where numerous people interact with one another and the environment, such as the workplace. By looking at our communication we take the third person perspective and notice traps keeping us stuck in *unwanted repetitive patterns* (URP). URPs take us further away from our desired goals (Pearce, 2007).

In order for Emily to understand her outlooks and how she places values and priorities on different functions in the organization, we used CMM's *Hierarchy Model* (Creede et al., 2012). Emily named the different functions and departments of the organization and then ranked them by their significance of importance (from her perspective). The top of the hierarchy is privileged in terms of perspective taking. This category is the lens from which everything else is seen, valued, and prioritized. It has the strongest influence on behavior and decision-making (see Fig. 1).

It comes as no surprise that Emily considered marketing to be near the top of the hierarchy, only second to leadership by the Executive Director. When Emily

Fig. 1 Emily's hierarchy model
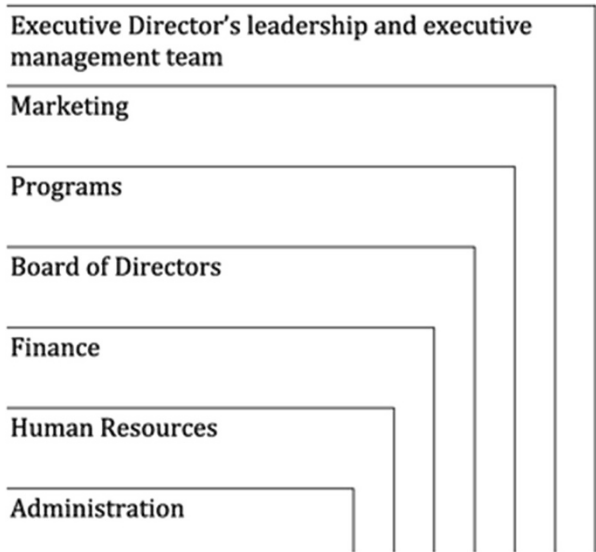
explained why she ranked the departments this way she described how important good leadership is and how it sets the tone for the organization. She made comments about how the leader needs to protect her staff members and at this point Emily became teary eyed. When I asked her why she was becoming teary eyed she said that she did not think her Executive Director was protecting her. I asked her from what was the Executive Director supposed to be protecting her and she said the Executive Director should be explaining (maybe demanding) that Emily's peers fall in line and cooperate with Emily about marketing. I asked her how this made her feel and what happens as a result of not feeling publically supported by her Executive Director. Contrary to the tension and strenuous working dynamics, Emily did feel the Executive Director supports her success on a one-on-one basis, however, not as often as she would like. Emily said her position is very frustrating and she feels unseen. She believes her peers do not respect her and is unable to do her job, yet she remains accountable to meet her performance goals.

Emily is stuck in an URP. She is increasingly frustrated, blaming others, and at a loss for how to obtain the results she so eagerly wants to achieve. The more this communication pattern yields these unwanted consequences, the more frustrated she becomes and less able to see she is caught in a destructive web of relationships and events.

At this juncture, we worked through a few other hierarchy models supposing how her peers might rank the levels of importance of the departments in the organization. Naturally, she supposed her peers would rank their own departments at the top of the hierarchy. We only needed to do two or three more models for her to see the pattern. One important takeaway from this activity is not whether Emily gets how the departments are ranked correctly, rather how this ranking influences and shapes her perspectives, which subsequently influences how she communicates and

behaves. This is critical information for Emily to better understand herself and what she values. It informs her of how she places significance on specific tasks, actions and what she expects from others.

We can loop back here to consider critical reflective processes as a way for Emily to better understand her interactions with others, especially her reactions. Emily can assess how well the results of her interactions with others are in alignment with her goals and intentions. Regardless of whether they are in alignment, there is ample opportunity for her to study herself and others through these reflective processes. Adjusting her means of communication and building to improve the quality of her relationships can keep her on the path of continued growth.

After grasping this, Emily has the opportunity to understand the attitudes, actions of her peers and the Executive Director, and why they behave the way they do. She can use this information to better plan for and construct the *episodes* of when she engages with others.

Preparing for a Mindful Conversation: Planning Episodes

When using episodes in this practice, an episode can be thought of as a particular moment in time, with a beginning, middle, end, and purpose. For example, if Emily wants to elicit more cooperation from her Executive Director with her peers, Emily can plan for a conversation with Teresa that would categorize as an episode.

The episode can start at the time of making the appointment or even before that if she wants to plan how she frames the request for the meeting. For example, Emily can discuss with Teresa about working with the program directors. Instead of her usual complaint about them not being cooperative, Emily could frame the purpose of the meeting as seeking guidance from Teresa on strategies for working more effectively with the program directors. Teresa will probably be receptive to this type of meeting because the framing leads her to believe Emily wants to make an improvement and that she is open to advice. It does not mean Emily has had a 180° turn around, yet Teresa will notice the difference in approach. Exploring what to say to begin, continue, and end the conversation, Emily could explore framing comments and requests by role-playing in her coaching session. The coach can encourage Emily to think about possible reactions from Teresa through a series of prompts that will cause Emily to reflect on the consequences of what she is saying. Anticipating reactions from the other person and subsequent actions are an important aspect to the coaching dynamic.

Every communication we have has a consequence and sets the stage for subsequent interactions. Emily's pattern of communication had been to focus on her immediate needs of getting her colleagues to cooperate with her without identifying what their needs might be and incentives for them to work with her. Through coaching and critical reflection, she was able to identify their priorities and motivations. Emily framed her comments and requests differently to arouse her peer's collaboration creating new patterns changing relationship dynamics. Emily was able

to shift the focus of her communication from subject to object gaining deeper self-awareness of her impact on others. She began to imagine what the reactions of her colleagues might be and to align her comments with the intended outcomes she was seeking. In turn, she is also providing opportunities for her colleagues to have their needs satisfied, as well.

Below is an example of the flow Emily prepared. We used the *Serpentine Model* from CMM (Creede et al., 2012), which allowed Emily to work her way through the course of the conversation she intended to have with the Executive Director. She was able to identify potential *critical moments* where she anticipated a challenging reaction from Teresa that she would need to manage constructively. The beauty in being able to work through the conversation before it happens is it allows Emily to generate responses that keep her on the path toward desired outcomes and not let her get caught up in emotional outbursts that may derail her. There is no guarantee that Emily will be able to call on these preparations as needed "in the moment"; however, preparation practice will provide available alternatives. *Reflection-in-action* refers to being able to figure out what is needed at the time of conversation as opposed to *reflection-on-action*, which is after the fact (Argyris & Schon, 1994) (see Fig. 2).

Conclusion

It is difficult to change our perspectives of self, others, and relationships. However, with the proper support transformational shifts are more readily available to us. When we work with a coach, we will be challenged and encouraged in ways we cannot do on our own. Working through a coaching process will provide tools and practice to garner the skills to shift from first to third person perspective, from subject to object. We will be able to foresee the patterns of our communication, relationship-building and meaning making and identify potential critical moments. Working through a critical self-reflection process with a coach creates a sense of agency and empowerment. As we develop and strengthen the self-reflective muscle through reflection-on-action, we grasp better reflection-in-action abilities. Transforming perspective is a deep paradigmatic change that causes us to examine and redefine our identities. We can better sustain our evolution through the guidance of a coach, which is appreciated under these circumstances.

For further research on transformative turns in narratives about self, other, and the situation as a result of coaching, we can apply the Coordinated Management of Meaning (CMM) as a qualitative research methodology. CMM offers ways to unpack complex conversations and interactions to understand them better and to look for ways to replicate and sustain these changes. One example of this can be to apply the CMM serpentine model to capture the flow of an important interaction between two people and then identify one or more critical moments within that flow. The critical moment can be explored using questions, such as: What influenced you to take that particular action? What happened as a result? What was your desired outcome? What else could have been done? What do you think the consequence of
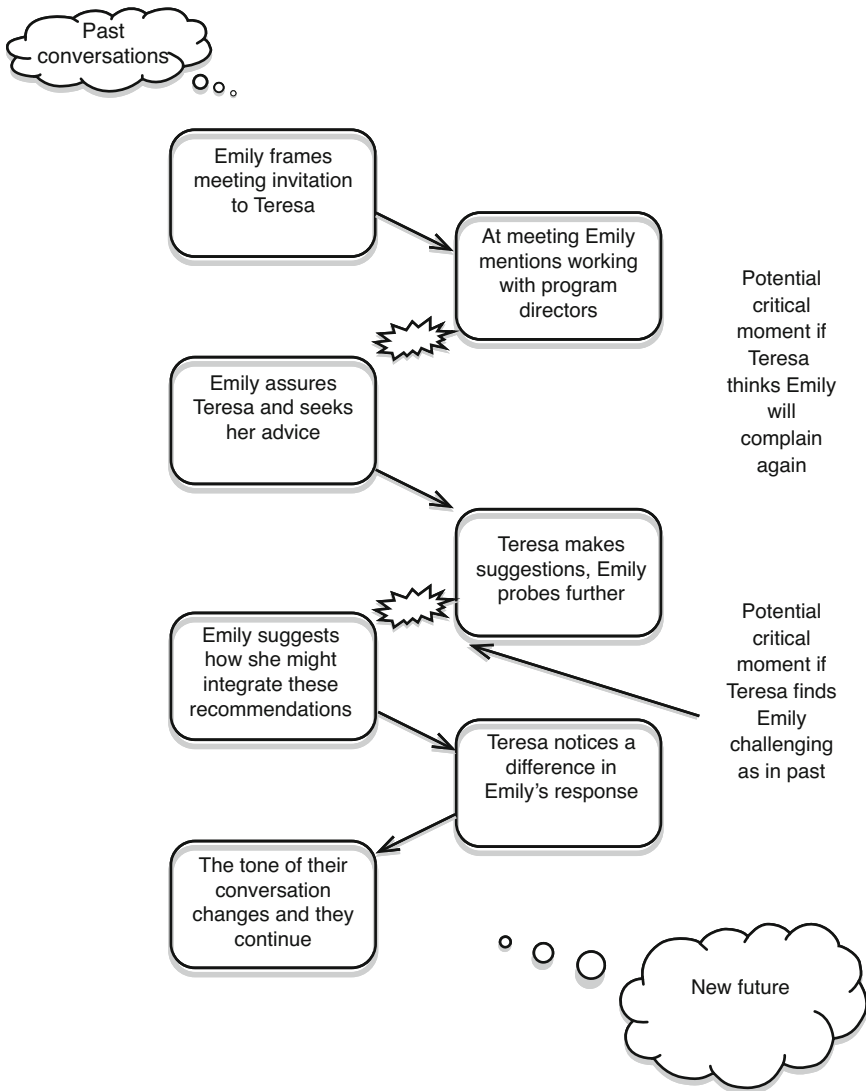
Fig. 2 Meeting preparation serpentine model

that action might have been? What skills or knowledge would you need to be able to take this different action? What circumstances would have supported you in doing this? A deeper unpacking and exploration of a particular critical moment provides us more awareness of the many decision points we have that are potential opportunities for transformation and growth.

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Understanding in Coaching: An Intersubjective Process

Wolfgang Scholl and Christoph Schmidt-Lellek

Introduction and Case Study

Understanding is to be understood as an *intersubjective process*. An understanding of the other in their otherness and an understanding of oneself with one's conscious and unconscious resonances are interwoven in a complex way. Acknowledging this, however, can be complicated in coaching by the expectation of some clients that a coach can offer something like an objectively valid answer to their questions. But this increases the danger of misunderstandings or disappointments if a solution developed in coaching does not prove itself in practice.

An example from coaching practice: After his studies and several years of successful work in a construction company, Robert, a young engineer, was faced with the decision of whether to take over his father's company as managing director. He first joined the company as a department head and made the experience that his father was constantly trying to patronize him, with the motto: "Act autonomously, but only according to my instructions!" Since he could no longer endure this, he sought coaching to help him decide how to break away from his father's company and go his own way. However, he found himself in a conflict between loyalty to the family business and the desire for an autonomous professional orientation elsewhere. The coach now tended to support the latter perspective, especially since he himself, having grown up in an educated middle-class milieu, was only able to find his own way after breaking with the parental home; and he became somewhat impatient

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when his client kept bringing up new counter-arguments. It finally became clear that the value of continuing the family business was more important to him, especially since there was no other successor within the family. The coach was then able to support him to openly approach and resolve the conflict with his father—something he himself had not been able to do at the time. The result was an agreement that his father handed over the management to him and withdrew from the company.

The process of understanding in this case thus presupposed that the coach, on the basis of his biographical experience, was able to empathize well with the client's situation and to put his own solution pattern aside in order to open up to the client's different context and his path. On the other hand, through the response of the coach, the client learned to understand himself better by being able to recognize his desire for autonomy as legitimate and valuable, in addition to family loyalty, and then to associate it with loyalty. Even ill-considered clichés, such as autonomy as synonymous with the dissolution of ties, can stand in the way of understanding and agreement on appropriate solutions.

However, problems of understanding and misinterpretation are the order of the day in the private sphere, in organizations, and also in coaching. This raises the fundamental question: How is understanding and communication possible, and how can it be improved? While in radical constructivism (e.g., by Glasersfeld, 1985, 2003) the possibility of a genuine understanding is doubted at all, in the following we will present both general possibilities of understanding and a way of understanding tailored to the individual case. The former involves nomothetical theories and hypotheses that are empirically tested and claim validity for all people, i.e. a behavioral science approach. The latter is an "art concept of understanding" that provides indications for concrete procedures. We introduce the two perspectives and finally integrate them into methodological guidelines for coaching practice.

Biological and Psychological Perspectives: How Is It Possible for People to Understand Each Other?

This question may be surprising, but it has rightly been pointed out by constructivists that it is often very difficult for a speaker to put their experience and the associations associated with it into words, and a reader or listener must then reconstruct what has been said on the basis of their own experiences and associations (Hejl, 1985). We will show how and why this is possible.

Formally, understanding can be summarized with Laing et al. (1966) as a comparison between the meta-perspective of an understanding person A and the perspective of a person B to be understood $A[B(x)] = B(x)$, or what A believes B is thinking corresponds to what B actually thinks. For B to feel understood, however, this is not yet enough, because this is only possible in the meta-meta-perspective: What B suspects as A's opinion of his own opinion $B(x)$ determines the feeling of understanding: $B\{A[B(x)]\} = B(x)$. There are sources of error on each side, namely

A may not understand B correctly, and B may also mistakenly believe that A does not understand him correctly, or even mistakenly believe that A understands him while A does not. Such double misinterpretations are not uncommon, because B's opinion and B's feeling of understanding take place in the same brain and do not seem to need further verification by further inquiries. The method of paraphrasing in the sense of active listening can greatly reduce such misinterpretations. For more difficult topics, however, such inquiries are not sufficient, because the respective opinions must first be developed together in a discussion; that is the actual task in coaching.

Empirically, understanding is linked to the difference between denotative and connotative meaning. *Denotative* is the simple assignment of a word to a selected section of reality; something is made the object of observation and is cognitively designated, e.g. "my colleague." In contrast, the emotional classification of the designated object in a three-dimensional coordinate system is *connotative*, combined with an impulse for action, which is usually recognizable in the interaction in non-verbal expressions: (1) Valence, the emotional positive versus negative differentiation, includes an approach tendency to the positive or avoidance of the negative object, (2) Power, the emotional strong versus weak differentiation, includes coveting and grasping an opportunity if feeling strong or fear and inhibition if feeling weak, and (3) Activity, the emotional active versus passive differentiation, includes physical activation in a state of arousal or quiet waiting in a state of calm contemplation (Osgood et al., 1957, 1975). What a statement really means to the speaker is therefore only to a small extent determined by the denotative meaning; this is only enough to know what the other person is talking about. The connotative meaning includes feelings and potential impulses for action which enable us to empathize and feel how the other person feels about the designated object and to cooperate with her or him. For example, the designation of a person as a "colleague" suggests an expectation of unproblematic positive communication and interaction, while a feeling of inferiority arises toward a "superior" as well as the question of whether something unpleasant might come one's way.

The possibility of this cognitive-affective understanding is biologically based through the coupling of inner feeling and outer, non-verbal expression of the feeling, which can be perceived and felt by the other. It is therefore of central importance that feelings, their non-verbal expression, and their verbal descriptions have the same three socio-emotional dimensions (with examples): *Valence (satisfaction–dissatisfaction) can be signalled by nonverbal expressions like closeness (laughing–turning away) & by verbal evaluation (positive–negative). Feelings of strength (pride–despair) may be nonverbally expressed as dominance (firm–fragile voice) & verbally through words of power (strong–weak). Finally, the intensity of feelings, i.e. arousal (agitated–calm) is nonverbally expressed through reactivity (fast–slow movements) & verbally through words of activation (active–passive).* With the help of these three dimensions, the adequacy and the correctness of the understanding can be gauged relatively well (Scholl, 2013). The assessment of actions and personalities is also judged along these three dimensions, so that reports of one's own and other people's experiences can be emotionally understood on the same basis. These three

socio-emotional dimensions have obviously developed in an evolutionary way, oriented toward the central problems of human coordination (ibid.). It is particularly important that the emotions and movements observed in the other person automatically stimulate the same neurons in the facing observer and can therefore be emotionally and physically simulated like one's own emotions and movements (Semin & Cacioppo, 2008).

Understanding is further secured by a socio-emotional *consistency mechanism* which can be successfully simulated mathematically as discovered by Affect Control Theory (Heise, 1979, 2007): The description of an event in a language and culture is socio-emotionally consistent if the overall emotional impression of the event results from the constellation of the connotative meaning of the words used. This consistency mechanism goes beyond learning the emotional meaning of the individual words of a language, because the consistency mechanism involves the constant (unconscious) effort to create uniformly emotionally colored descriptions of reality in the culture over and over again. Those who disagree with a description must accordingly use different emotionally colored words and non-verbal expressions to make their dissent clear (Schröder & Scholl, 2009; Schröder et al., 2013). Negative experiences with a colleague, for instance, also change the verbal description. If you hear: "A colleague refuses to help another colleague" something seems to be wrong or at least an incomplete report because there is a *discrepancy* (mathematically a "deflection") to what would be expected from a "colleague." So you probably will ask: why he did this and what a kind of colleague he might be? And you will learn from an extended description that this colleague maybe was a "jealous colleague" or even a "careerist," and with this linguistic addition the felt (and palpable) meaning of the "colleague" changes and fits to the refused help. This socio-emotional basis of a culture's language, detected and confirmed by Affect Control Theory, creates coherent, culturally consistent descriptions of reality through the continuous understanding and agreement efforts of the language community, which ease the comprehensibility of utterances. All participants unconsciously try to design each description to others in such a way that both the individual words and the entire word constellation of the description confirm the cultural meanings.

Affect control theory thus makes the principles of social construction explicit (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). Although every person has to (re)construct individually the perceived reality and the statements of other people with their own brain in the course of the socialization, the emotional significance of the observed aspects of reality is socially communicated via these three emotional dimensions and their non-verbal and verbal expressions. Thus, the individual constructions are socially conveyed, secured, and successively established by observations of behavior and its consequences (how positive? how strong? how active?) as social, generally understandable constructions together with their social references (Scholl, 2013; Heise et al., 2015).

Perspectives of Philosophical Hermeneutics: What Does Understanding Mean?

Hermeneutics is the philosophical term for "art of understanding," the discipline that deals with the possibilities, forms, and processes of understanding. It concerns first understanding of texts and, in its further development, also of persons. The term is derived from the Greek: *hermeneúein* means "to understand, translate, interpret". Hermeneutics was founded by Friedrich Schleiermacher (1838/1977) as the "Art of Understanding" and further elaborated by Wilhelm Dilthey (1900/1990). Dilthey used the distinction between "explaining" and "understanding": While the natural sciences seek to *explain* phenomena causally and derive them from general laws, the humanities seek to *understand* the historical individuality in phenomena. The interpretation of a text aims to understand the "particular" that its author expresses in it. Understanding, therefore, means "recreating" in oneself the experience of the author (ibid., p. 318). So while an author tries to express his experience in a written linguistic expression, the interpreting reader tries to return to a vivid experience via this expression.

Hans-Georg Gadamer is the most famous representative of philosophical hermeneutics in the twentieth century. In his major work "Truth and Method" (1960/1990) he describes understanding as the central activity of human existence. Understanding is not only a reconstruction of the respective subjective meaning of, for example, a historical or literary text, but it also means entering into a process of tradition in which past and present are conveyed (Gadamer, 1990, p. 300).

Gadamer particularly emphasized the "*hermeneutic circle,*" which consists in the fact that in processes of understanding one's own preconception or "prejudice" in its respective historicity always is involved. But it cannot be concluded that one has to eliminate such a preconception—according to the ideal originating from the Enlightenment (p. 276)—in order to arrive at a correct, unprejudiced understanding of what one encounters. Rather, there is now the challenge of becoming aware of the historically or biographically developed structures of preconception, i.e. through which "glasses" one tries to look at and understand the world. Therefore, the question arises whether there is nothing other than these "glasses," as radical constructivism suggests ("all knowledge is a construct"), or whether with these "glasses," constructs, perspectives, there is also a contact with the facts, classically expressed, an adequacy (lat. *adaequatio*) between the subject of knowledge and the object of knowledge. This means that understanding must prove itself in the practice of understanding (p. 272). Gadamer speaks here of a "fusion of horizons," which means that a true understanding of the other always has a retroactive effect on oneself, insofar as one learns to recognize and to question one's pre-comprehension. This "hermeneutical circle" cannot be avoided nor cut short: "Whoever wants to understand a text is [...] prepared to let it tell him something. Therefore, a hermeneutically trained awareness of the otherness of the text must be receptive from the outset. Such receptivity, however, requires neither factual 'neutrality' nor even self-extinction, but includes the detached appropriation of one's

own preconceptions and prejudices" (Gadamer, 1990, p. 273, own translation). If you replace the word "text" with "person" in this quote, this sentence can be directly applied to the encounter with the otherness and singularity of another person and thus to professional interaction in coaching.

There are some differences to be considered between understanding texts once they have been written and current conversational situations. The understanding of texts by one interpreter can be examined intersubjectively by other interpreters; this is how historical research proceeds, for example. In current coaching situations this possibility does not exist, but there are two other possibilities: On the one hand, initial preliminary interpretations can be supplemented, deepened, and corrected by paraphrasing and queries. On the other hand, the non-verbal parts of communication are also available, and thus the emotional meaning can be grasped much more directly and better than with pure texts (see above). With video analysis, both verbal and non-verbal utterances can be examined intersubjectively (Schermuly & Scholl, 2012).

The importance of the hermeneutic circle for understanding is also clear from recent empirical research. According to Grice (1975) understanding in a communication situation is only possible with a *cooperative attitude*, one has to get involved with the other person. According to Higgins (1981), in understanding a person A tries to envision theirselves the knowledge and opinions of the addressed person B, i.e. to take the meta-perspective. This leads to a so-called *tuning in,* a tuning into the world of thought of B. However, this alone makes A's thinking more similar to B's thinking, because A activates B's descriptive concepts cognitively and affectively. If this attempt at understanding is communicated from A to B, the *"saying is believing"* effect occurs, i.e. A changes—usually imperceptibly for themselves—their opinion of the object under consideration and approaches the opinion of B. In the course of communication, i.e. with the reciprocity of verbal and non-verbal expression and the attempts to understand the other, there is a mutual rapprochement and a more or less far-reaching *"shared reality"* (Echterhoff et al., 2009). This requires a cooperative attitude on both sides and constant checking of the extent to which one has really understood the other, as well as sufficient appreciation, without which the adoption of perspectives and empathy can be neither properly wanted nor properly pursued. In this sense, processes of understanding go hand in hand with an understanding of reality (Higgins & Pittman, 2008). Understanding and communication are apparently accompanied and/or influenced by unconscious synchronization of body movements and positive affects and thus can be felt (Tschacher et al., 2014).

Methodological Guidelines for Coaching Practice

What is the relevance of these statements in practice? First of all, the sequence of *experience–expression–impression–understanding* is fundamental for understanding: The experience of a person urges for an expression through which they can process themselves their experience of inner feelings and outer events and

may communicate them to an interested listener. It is thus a process of translation from experience into verbal and non-verbal expression. By letting the listener take in and interpret the resulting impressions, they can participate in the client's experience and thus create it anew within themselves. The perceived expression is translated back into experience and thereby associated with own patterns of experience. Understanding is therefore a creative act, because in addition to open oneself to the client's experience, it is always an interpretative resonance. If this resonance is in turn expressed and reflected, it can open changes in the client's own understanding of their experience—possibly even if there is a difference in the coach's non-verbal and verbal expression to that of the client. After all, it is the overarching goal for a client to arrive at a changed, more intensive, clearer understanding of him- or herself and thus to find new options for action.

It should also be borne in mind that our understanding always takes place in a specific temporal, spatial, and institutional context. Therefore, this *context* must also be included in understanding, as e.g. Argelander (1970) tried to do with his concept of "scenic understanding": Besides the "objective information," i.e. biographical facts, and the "subjective information," i.e. personal meanings, the "scenic information" is necessary for understanding a person within her context. The recognition and understanding of psychological, communicative, institutional, or organizational phenomena is therefore not only about language, but also about various modes of expression in which life processes are articulated. This requires appropriate methodological approaches for consulting practice. A few examples of this can be mentioned (for further details cf. Schmidt-Lellek, 2017b):

Body language: Direct communication between people contains both verbal and non-verbal components, the "body language," i.e. facial expressions, gestures, vocalization, speech rate, posture, body contact, autonomous body reactions (blushing, bleaching, sweating, etc.). These can comment, intensify, or even counteract the verbal statements. Communication in professional contexts requires a practitioner to be able to consciously perceive these non-verbal "messages" and also to react to them consciously in order to grasp the complexity of self-expression and to do justice to the counterpart with the broadest possible understanding (cf. Argyle, 1975; Schulz von Thun, 1981*; see Means of Verbal and Nonverbal Communication in Coaching, this vol.*).

Dream language: The language of dreams is a valuable source of information about the unconscious parts of a personality. The dream language often uses coded, sometimes drastic, frightening symbols and yet it is a significant expression of personality. For many people, it initially seems closed, a "foreign language" that requires "translation work," i.e. the interpretation of dreams. There are many different methodological approaches to this, which have been developed in psychotherapeutic schools. For coaching, Schmid presented a rather playful-associative approach to working with dreams, which follows a double cognitive interest by adding a "reality-shaping aspect" to an "understanding-processing aspect" (Schmid, 2005, p. 384).

Organizational culture: Institutions and companies not only function based on rationally planned formal aspects of the organization, but are also shaped by their

respective organizational culture, which includes non-formal—and usually unreflected—systemic phenomena. As a rule, the members of the organization are therefore not fully aware of them, but these systemic aspects are mostly taken for granted and underlie their actions. They thus serve as collective orientation patterns, how problems are to be understood and described, how the members of the organization deal with each other, etc. However, if, for example, in change processes or company mergers, accustomed cultural patterns have become conflictual or dysfunctional, they must be made conscious—and open to debate (see chapters on 'Organizational Culture and Coaching', 'The Organizational Context in Coaching', and 'Metaphors of "Organization" and their Meaning in Coaching', this vol.). The efforts of understanding can therefore also refer to such cultural expressions. As a rule, these non-linguistic expressions are first verbalized in order to be able to deal with them and, if necessary, to change them (cf. Schein, 1992).

Non-linguistic methodical approaches to understanding: These include material media (building blocks, figures), which may help to make relationship dynamics or organizational structures sensually visible (cf. Schreyögg, 2012, p. 315). Or one can stimulate an empathic understanding of another person and his or her problems by role-playing (ibid., p. 284). In experience-activating procedures such as psychodrama, complex problem constellations can be staged in a group setting, so that the experiences of a protagonist are reenacted by several role-players and thus become understandable through re-experience; then, corrective scenes are developed (cf. Buer, 1989). The method of understanding consists of a feedback giver (a group member or the counsellor) abandoning the position of the listener and entering the client's own means of expression: By identifying with their role or position in an organization, they can come closer to the client's experience in order to be able to reflect and interpret their own experience in this position. The client thus has the opportunity to view their experience from a distance and thus arrive at other meanings. Or they move themselves into another position with the method of *role reversal*, in order to distance themselves from their original experience in identifying with a counterpart and to observe their expression and the effects on the counterpart from a distance. Such an experience, however, needs to be verbalized in order to grasp overarching structural connections and, not least, to free oneself from a sometimes powerful role identification.

Conclusion

In *conclusion,* understanding has a dialogical structure, as Gadamer, on the one hand, and Higgins, on the other, clearly emphasize: In the active attempt to understand, a listener is induced to deal with their own pre-comprehension. This examination flows into the dialogical process of understanding and contributes to an *intersubjective understanding.* Especially in the professional setting of coaching when accurate understanding of another person in the context of their respective situation is at stake, it is necessary to know one's own patterns of understanding

well, and to question them in the encounter with the other person where appropriate. This challenge can be met, for example, by reflecting on transference and counter-transference dynamics (see chapter on Transference and Countertransference and their Significance for Coaching, this vol.). All this happens within the framework of a professional relationship with its tense paradoxes or polarities (Schmidt-Lellek, 2017a).

The goal of these intersubjective processes is a mutual understanding and agreement between the persons involved, which open the possibilities of cooperative action. Successful cooperation in working contexts requires that the goals, contents, and processes as well as the procedures of the members of an organization or company are sufficiently understood by those involved so that shared responsibility can be borne.

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Values and Their Importance in Coaching

Klaus Boehnke and Katja Hanke

Case Study

Imagine you are a coach and you are visited by four different clients. These clients are politicians from a country with proportional representation as its electoral system. They are looking for coaching to help them apply for a promising position on the party list for the next election. The politicians may come from a right-wing populist party, a centrist liberal party, a green party, and a party from the left of the political spectrum. What do their different value orientations mean for you as a coach?

Values: A Conceptual Summary

People's attitudes and behavioral tendencies are influenced by their value orientations. As guiding principles of their lives, these are important on an individual and cultural level. The article begins with a general definition of values. It then outlines

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three important value theories (Schwartz, Inglehart, Hofstede). In addition, the influence of values on attitudes and behavior and their modification are assessed, and finally the meaning of values in the context of coaching is discussed.

Definition

Individual value orientations—understood as abstract guiding principles that have an influence on behavior and experience—are of direct relevance to many areas of life. Schwartz (1994, p. 20) defines values as follows: "A value is a (1) belief (2) pertaining to desirable end states or modes of conduct, that (3) transcends specific situations, (4) guides selection or evaluation of behavior, people, and events, and (5) is ordered by importance relative to other values to form a system of value priorities." The extent to which attitudes and behavior are influenced by personal value orientations depends on individual, social, and situational factors. Value preferences are part of individual and social identity; they motivate and justify decisions to act. In the following, the currently most important social science value theories are presented. The value concept of Shalom Schwartz (1992) is probably the most intensively received value theory in psychology, and it is the first one that will be presented in the following.

Value Dimensions According to Shalom Schwartz

Pioneering work by Milton Rokeach (1973) forms the basis for Shalom Schwartz's research on the universal structure of individual value preferences.[1] According to Schwartz (Schwartz et al., 2012), there is a systematic differentiation of value types based on a universal dimensional structure. Schwartz sees values as cognitive representations of three universal requirements in the life of every human being: biological needs (such as physical integrity), coordination of social interactions (flourishing togetherness), and survival of the group and its ability to function (sufficient prosperity). From these three basic requirements, 19 motivationally differentiated value types were derived that can be summarized into superordinate values (*italics*): *Universalism* (concern, nature, and tolerance); *self-direction* (thought, action); *stimulation*; *hedonism; achievement*; *power* (dominance, resources); *face*; *security* (personal, societal); *tradition*; *conformity* (rules, interpersonal), *humility,* and *benevolence* (caring, dependability); (see Fig. 1).

The 19 value types are systematically linked and arranged in a circle. This means that neighboring values can also appear together as an orientation. It is probable that,

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[1] Schwartz also formulated a theory of values at the cultural level; this will not be discussed here, but see an evaluation in Witte et al. (2020).
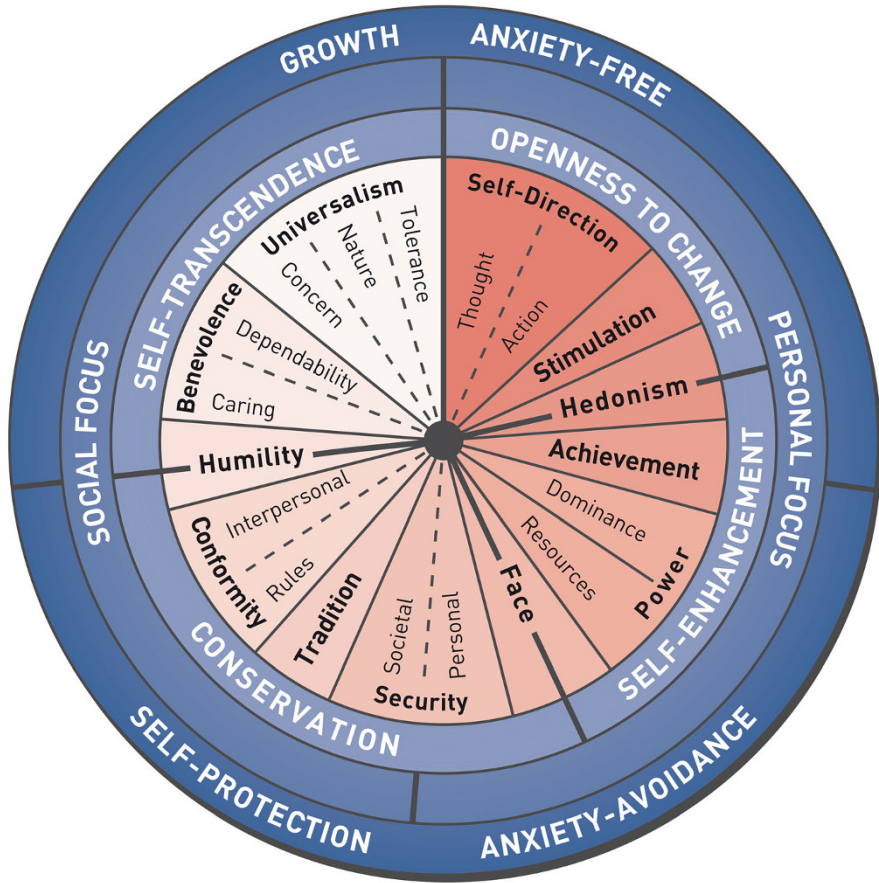
Fig. 1 Circumplex model of human values adapted from Schwartz et al. (2012)

for example, the preference for conformity and tradition values occur together, i.e., they are positively linked: those who prefer traditional principles typically also find the acceptance of rules important. In contrast, universalism (e.g., concern) and power (e.g., dominance) are opposite in the value system. This means that these values are not usually preferred together. In Schwartz's theory, the 19 value types form a closed system of complementary and conflicting value orientations. The motivational continuum of the set of values can be derived from the different relationships between the values (see Fig. 1). The circular structure of the 19 value types is based on two value dimensions. The vertical dimension of values focuses on *anxiety-free growth* vs. *self-protection and anxiety avoidance*. The horizontal dimension contrasts a social focus with a personal focus. These two value dimensions form a central starting point for examining the influence of values on attitudes and behavior. Schwartz's value theory was tested in some 80 cultural groups; its universal validity as a value structure theory can be assumed.

In the coaching process, Schwartz's values can be used to reflect and support people in reducing discrepancies between currently experienced life situations and ideal-typical life goals.

The Value Concept of Ronald Inglehart

The value concept of Ronald Inglehart (1997) also knows two dimensions. The first dimension of this value theory contrasts *self-expression values* with *survival values.* The first value dimension is a further development of the juxtaposition of postmaterialist and materialist values that has been known since the late 1970s (Inglehart, 1977). Their psychological basis is the hierarchy of needs according to Maslow (1954). Inglehart assumes that people make those needs that were lacking in their youth the basis of their value orientation. If physiological needs (e.g. food) and security needs were not met in early life, Inglehart assumes that survival values will be important to people in later life. If, on the other hand, as is often the case in developed Western countries, all the basic needs described by Maslow, including the need for recognition at a young age, were met, self-actualization values can become important to people. The second dimension according to Inglehart contrasts traditional values with secular-rational values (Norris & Inglehart, 2004). Of all the value concepts currently under intensive discussion, Inglehart's approach is probably the most widely received one due to its strong resonance in psychology and sociology as well as in political science. This is mainly due to the fact that Inglehart's approach assumes isomorphism: The approach claims to be able to predict individual behavior and experience as well as to explain and interpret developmental tendencies of institutions, organizations, and societies. In the context of Inglehart's approach, value analysis in the coaching process is to be defined in the broadest sense as help for self-realization or as support in reaching the next higher level of need satisfaction according to Maslow. Moreover, within the framework of this theory, values of individuals can be directly compared with those of organizations and societies.

Cultural Values According to Geert Hofstede

Geert Hofstede (2001; Hofstede & Minkov, 2011) first identified four (later six) cultural value dimensions, on the basis of which systematic differences between different cultures can be explained: *Power distance*, *individualism* vs. *collectivism*, *uncertainty avoidance*, *masculinity* vs. *femininity, long-term orientation* vs. *short-term normative orientation, and indulgence* vs. *restraint.* These six value dimensions are the basis for indices by which cultures can be categorized.

By *power distance* Hofstede understands the extent to which members of an organization or institution or of societies as a whole presuppose and accept an

unequal distribution of power. Cultures that have a low power distance expect a more egalitarian distribution of power in society. By *individualism* vs. *collectivism* Hofstede understands the extent to which individuals are integrated into groups. In individualistic societies, the performance and rights of individuals count above all. By contrast, individuals in collectivist societies act mainly as members of a lifelong and cohesive group or organization. *Uncertainty avoidance* is about the strength of the tendency of members of a society to avoid uncertainty and the fears that arise from it. Cultures in which uncertainty avoidance is rather low have fewer problems in dealing with unknown situations. *Masculinity* vs. *femininity* is about the distribution of roles between the sexes. Masculine cultures place great value on competitiveness and power as well as strictly separated gender roles. In contrast, feminine cultures emphasize smooth transitions in gender roles. *Long-* vs. *short-term orientation* is about time horizons of social life. Cultures with a long-term orientation are future-oriented and focus on situations of long-term benefit maximization. Cultures with a short-term orientation, on the other hand, are present and past oriented and focus on socially acceptable, quick successes. The sixth dimension of Hofstede's approach, *indulgence* vs. *restraint*, represents the extent to which members of a society attempt to control their impulses. In permissive cultures there is a tendency to live out wishes and needs freely and to have fun. In restrictive cultures the conviction prevails that the curbing of desires is important.

The dimensionalization of Hofstede was initially understood as an approach that made it possible to distinguish cultures in terms of the values addressed in the dimensions. In the meantime, however, survey instruments have been presented which are meant to make it possible to create individual value preference profiles. In this respect, the dimensions described by Hofstede can also be used to record individual value preferences. From the perspective of Hofstede's value approach, value analysis in coaching could be understood as support in the search for a culturally appropriate way of dealing with the six value dimensions in the given cultural context.

Values and Their Connection with Attitudes, Behavior, and Experience

A fundamental question, which is also important in coaching, is how values and human behavior are connected and what influence value preferences have on attitudes and behavior and on behavioral changes. Values are superordinate cognitive representations of motivations and life orientations, from which attitudes and behavior are derived. Poortinga et al. (2004) argue, with reference to Stern et al. (1995), that "behavior is linked to values through a causal chain of intermediate variables [...] values are seen as causally antecedent to worldviews, more specific beliefs and attitudes, and, ultimately, behavior" (p. 72). According to Homer and Kahle (1988), values are the most abstract social cognition and thus form the basis

for less abstract attitudes and for specific behavior: The existence of certain value preferences makes certain attitudes and behavior more likely. However, the link between values and behavior is weaker or less direct than the link between values and attitudes (Homer & Kahle, 1988).

If one understands coaching as a process of support in clarifying goals and coping with tasks in various areas of life (see the chapters Coaching Definitions and Concepts, Self-reflection in Coaching and Goals in Coaching in this volume) and considers that the given requirements are often formulated externally (i.e., neither by the coach nor by the client), it is obvious to interpret coaching as an endeavor that attempts to bring about a higher compatibility of attitudes and behavior of people seeking coaching with the expectations derived from the requirements of life situations. Coaching, then, is about clarifying the value preferences of people seeking coaching and reconciling them with the requirements inherent in a current situation. In the process of coaching, an attempt is made to reduce any discrepancies between the goals and ways of dealing with upcoming problems and the values of those seeking coaching, so that the current problem and the resulting subsequent problems can be better dealt with.

It is indispensable for the coaching process to work out the influence of value preferences of the coaching seekers on their attitudes and the behavior shown and to examine how a modification of values, attitudes, and behavior in the context of an upcoming task can contribute to a comprehensive positive experience. For a better understanding of the outlined process, it is necessary to first outline the available evidence on the relationship between value preferences, attitudes, and behavior. In general, there is ample empirical evidence that values have a significant influence on attitudes and behavior. Above all, those attitudes and behaviors are influenced that have a similar content as their associated values. For example, socially focused values are strongly related to prosocial behavior, while security values predetermine attitudes towards specific safety-relevant areas of behavior. The effect of values on attitudes and behavior is consistent but can vary in strength. These fluctuations mean nothing other than that internal and external factors weaken or strengthen the potency of the link. In the following, individual, social, and situational factors are described which strengthen or weaken the influence of personal values on attitudes and behavior.

Individual factors. Individual factors can include personality traits. These have an influence on social behavior that should not be underestimated and also on the extent to which one's own behavior subjectively appears to be controllable, or on the extent to which the expectations of others influence one's own behavior. For one particular personality trait—the tendency towards self-monitoring—a brief outline describes how it influences and to what extent value preferences determine attitudes and, above all, behavior: self-monitoring is about modifying one's own behavior on the basis of the expected attitudes of others. People with a strong tendency towards self-monitoring tend to observe themselves and others closely in interaction situations and to adapt their own actions to the expectations of others. The guidelines for action for them are not their personal values, but the interaction requirements they experience. The behavior-controlling function of personal values is weaker with strong

self-monitoring; with weak self-monitoring, however, behavior that is more consistent with one's own values is strengthened (Kristiansen & Zanna, 1988).

Interpersonal factors. Social relations are an integral part of human life. Values play a central role in the development and maintenance of social relationships. We like to surround ourselves with people who are like us in their values. The similarity to another person experienced due to similar values influences our behavior. We continually compare ourselves with others with whom we interact (Suls & Miller, 1977). This comparison process usually takes place unconsciously. The basis of this comparison is the implicit expectation of the positive reinforcement of personal values and thus the endorsement of one's own lifestyle. The function of this mutual comparison between two persons is a mutual self-affirmation. *Congruence of values* is often regarded as a guarantee of cohesion and a sense of community. This quasi-axiomatic approach is also an obvious one to consider when analyzing the coaching process: How can a coach work with clients who have different value preferences? And regarding the coaching relationship: Is the mutually experienced congruence of values between coach and client a prerequisite for success?

Contextual factors. Contextual influences on relationships between value preferences, attitudes, and behavior are of a diverse nature. On the one hand, certain situations, possibly in interaction with personality traits, can activate value attitudes in inter-individually different ways. Milieus, for example, suggest certain value preferences and the attitudes and behavior derived from them. Situations, milieus, and cultures then not only stand for different value preferences. Their characteristics also have an influence on the relationships between value preferences on the one hand and attitudes and behavior on the other. This places highly complex demands on the coaching process. Take, for example, coaching for managers in preparation for a management job in a subsidiary in Wuhan. It should be remembered that congruence of values is much more important in Chinese culture than in Euro-American cultures. Not only do people in different situations, milieus, and cultures have different value preferences, but also the importance of interpersonal agreement in value preferences and the behavior and attitudes derived from them differ.

Returning to our coaching example from the beginning, it is true that the different social roles that a politician can take on (e.g., the role of women, conservatives, "veterans," the expert on topic X, etc.) already create value incongruencies in the person themselves. Depending on the political situation as well as on the interpersonal context (i.e., the persons who are present in a situation—likely to also be influenced by media—and whose opinion seems important), these have an influence on the close connection between value preferences and articulated attitudes and behavior shown. Campaign objectives do not change value preferences, but their importance for attitudes and behavior does.

A general distinction should be made as to whether a coach accompanies a process, for example in the sense of promoting self-reflection, or whether (also) a specific problem is tackled with the aim of changing behavior. It is a different matter whether the general aim is to strengthen the self-confident appearance in situations with an audience or whether it is about preparing coaching seekers for a clearly defined competitive situation. In the former situations, the coach will be particularly

Fig. 2 Magic triangle of congruence of values in coaching
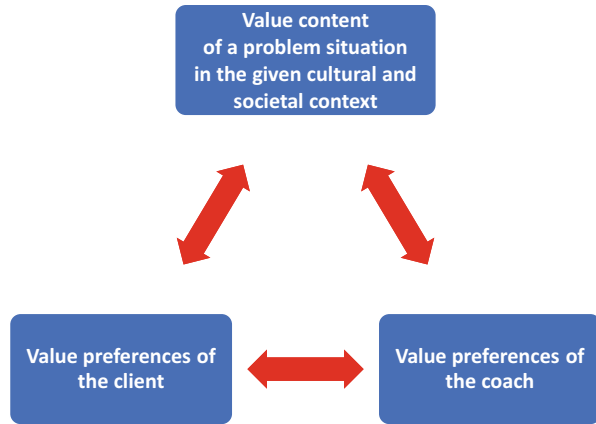
sensitive to the value preferences of the person seeking coaching. However, if the goal is to achieve a narrowly defined success in changing behavior, then (according to the reasons given in the sections on individual and interpersonal conditions for a close relationship between value preferences and behavior) a medium value *congruence* between a coach and their client would be beneficial.

Values and Their Significance in Coaching

The presentation of the various value theories and the outlined influence of value preferences on attitudes and behavior should have made clear by now that one concept is particularly relevant for coaching: value congruence. It seems legitimate to us to speak of the *magic triangle of congruence of values* (see Fig. 2).

Let us try to explain the magic triangle of congruence of values using the example already outlined: Four female politicians are looking for coaching to help them apply for a promising position on the party list for the next election. The politicians may come from a right-wing populist party, a centrist liberal party, a green party, and a party from the left of the political spectrum. As far as the value content of the task at hand is concerned, all four female politicians face the task of self-assertion; in the terminology of Schwartz's set of values, it is about dominance. Women striving for dominance, however, is not equally appreciated in the *cultural context* of their respective parties. There is a similar dilemma with the values of the coach because *success coaching*—in which a coach plays a role similar to that of a sports coach—is a process of performance optimization. The involvement in this process will be in line with the professional understanding of each individual coach and the underlying values to varying degrees. Successful coaching of politicians is also likely to require that a coach does not conflict with the prevailing value preferences of the party of those seeking coaching. If we had also included a female politician from the extremist far right in our example of political coaching, the coach's trained value

sensitivity would probably not be the basis for coaching success if a coach has value preferences that are common in the leftish alternative political spectrum. The professionally necessary authenticity of the coach would probably be difficult to guarantee. The value preferences of the women politicians in our example are likely to differ significantly. Let's assume that, according to Schwartz's terminology, the right-wing populist politician is primarily concerned with personal security and reputation, the centrist liberal politician with self-determination in ideas and actions, the green politician with tolerance and protection of the environment and the politician from the left with responsibility and reliability. The—stereotyping—example makes clear that there is no a priori congruence of values in the Magic Triangle. In coaching politicians, it will generally be very rare; in sports coaching, this may be different, but even there it is not "natural," but needs to be actively addressed. If the value preferences in the Magic Triangle are relatively far apart at the beginning of a coaching session, what makes the coaching success possible? Surely it is not the leading to the values of one of the "agents" in the Magic Triangle. What is required is the optimization (not the maximization!) of value congruence by disclosing the values of all three agents of the Magic Triangle: coach, problem, and coaching seeker, or more concise—"context–coach–client." Also with regard to congruence of values in the "Magic Triangle" the classical Yerkes-Dodson law (Yerkes & Dodson, 1908) applies, that—in thematic variation—a medium degree of congruence is most likely to guarantee successful coaching (see also Blakey & Day, 2012), while both an excess and a too low degree of congruence stand in the way of success. De Dreu (2006) reports a similar finding for the connection between task-related team conflicts and the extent of innovation achieved in companies: A medium degree of task-related team conflicts was associated with the best results in terms of innovation, while particularly low and particularly high task-related team conflicts produced equally poorer innovation results. This finding seems to us to be transferable to our example of success coaching in a political context: Congruence of values in the "team" coach-client should have a medium degree if—in this case—an election success is to be achieved.

In a coaching situation in which value sensitivity is in the foreground, i.e., in a *growth coaching where* personal growth is targeted, this might be different. In such situations, it would be important for the coach to take a step back so that the potential of those seeking coaching can be fully developed: The more value sensitivity a coach shows, the greater the chance of achieving personal growth. The work of de Dreu (2006) also provides relevant findings in this area. For he shows that the curvilinear connection he has found between conflict strength and the extent of innovation only exists for task-related conflicts, but not for relationship conflicts in the team. In growth coaching, the "team" coach-client is more about minimizing relationship conflicts: Value sensitivity should be maximized (not optimized). In this sense, the *Magic Triangle of congruence of values* documented in Fig. 2 explicitly refers only to coaching that involves limited behavioral changes or performance improvements, and not to growth coaching.

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Workplace Coaching Research: Charted and Uncharted Territories

Silja Kotte and Gil Bozer

Introduction: Understanding Workplace Coaching

At present, our understanding of workplace coaching is still fragmented and rife with contradictions. On the one hand, coaching has been documented as the fastest-growing field within consulting (Liljenstrand & Nebeker, 2008). Moreover, the coaching industry was reported as the fastest-growing sector in the world second only to information technology (ICF, 2016). As such, workplace coaching is now an established part of the human resource development portfolio in many organizations (Bozer & Delegach, 2019). Indeed, scan any business or management newspaper or magazine (e.g., the *Financial Times* or *Harvard Business Review*) and you will probably find an article about coaching practices in government, business, or non-profit organizations designed with the intention of helping individuals, teams, or organizations lead, thrive, and compete effectively and with greater purpose.

On the other hand, in previous decades, and certainly before 2010, workplace coaching was characterized as a field of practice of industrial and organizational psychologists that suffered from a serious lack of research (e.g., Silzer et al., 2008), such that many professionals and academics regarded it as an elusive, pseudo-scientific, and intricate intervention (see chapter: Pseudoscience and charlatanry). Article titles such as "The Wild West of Executive Coaching" (Sherman & Freas, 2004) and "Coaching in the Wild" (Sonesh et al., 2015b) illustrated not only the high level of disagreement over what "coaching" means and how it can be characterized,

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but also how it can be distinguished from alternative and more established developmental interventions. Importantly, the pre-2010 period in coaching research suffered from serious ambiguities regarding how and why coaching works. The post-2010 period, however, has brought about a shift in the workplace coaching literature, moving from a practice-driven research field, with publications mostly in niche journals on coaching and consulting, towards a scientifically credible research field that increasingly yields methodologically robust theory-driven publications in major and respected journals (Bachkirova, 2017; de Haan, 2019; Kotte, 2019). For example, a recent systematic literature review (SLR) of workplace coaching (Bozer & Jones, 2018) analyzed the results of 117 previously published empirical studies (quantitative and/or qualitative), of which 57 were pre-post studies comprising 18 within-subject and 39 between-subject design studies (including 20 non-randomized control groups and three randomized controlled trials). Additionally, the past 10 years have seen the publication of a number of SLRs and meta-analyses (MAs) that help to integrate the knowledge of what we currently know and do not (yet) know about coaching. This development boosts our confidence that coaching research will essentially be able to push back the "research frontier" (Kelly-Irving, 2014), advance into unexplored territories of knowledge and, ultimately, become increasingly relevant to coaching practitioners as well.

The terms executive coaching, leadership coaching, business coaching, professional coaching, and workplace coaching are often used interchangeably in both the practitioner and academic literature. In this chapter we use the term "workplace coaching" (hereafter referred to as "coaching") as it represents the recent trend toward coaching accessibility to employees at all organizational levels and reflects the unique context of coaching provided within the workplace where the organization plays a key role as a stakeholder in the triangular coaching relationship. We define workplace coaching as a custom-tailored development intervention that uses a collaborative, reflective, goal-focused relationship provided by a professional coach (internal or external, but without formal supervisory authority over the client) in order to achieve professional outcomes that are valued by the client and their organization (Bozer & Jones, 2018).

A Framework for Synthesizing the Current State of Workplace Coaching Research

In order to synthesize the current state of coaching research and to "organize" the extant evidence-based knowledge, we introduce a framework in line with input-process-output frameworks proposed in the workplace coaching literature (e.g., Ely et al., 2010; Greif, 2013; Joo, 2005). A key distinction is made between coaching outcome (or coaching effectiveness) on the one hand, and factors impacting upon coaching effectiveness on the other.

Research on coaching outcomes is concerned with the question: "Does it work?" and "What types of outcomes does coaching yield?". A taxonomy that originates from research on workplace training (Kirkpatrick, 1967; Kraiger et al., 1993) is now frequently applied to coaching. It differentiates four levels of outcomes: First, the subjectively perceived benefit from coaching; second, affective and cognitive learning outcomes, for example increased job-related self-efficacy or self-reflection; third, behavior-based outcomes, that is, client behavior changes that occur as a result of coaching such as improved leadership behavior; and fourth, the contribution of coaching to performance results. This last level includes not only the individually improved job performance of the client but also ripple effects within the organization such as an increased job commitment among the client's subordinates.

Research on factors impacting upon coaching effectiveness is concerned with the question: "How does it work?" It seeks to understand the underlying mechanisms and processes that influence effectiveness. Input factors include coach and client characteristics (e.g., personality, educational, and professional background). Process factors include coach and client attitudes and behavior, the relationships between coaching stakeholders (i.e., coach, client, and sponsoring organization), and characteristics of the coaching intervention such as the duration or the setting (e.g., face-to-face vs. online). Contextual factors include, among others, the organizational and the broader societal-level context.

In the following, we provide an overview of the current state of workplace coaching research based on a synthesis of the SLRs since 2010 and the extant MAs that were published in peer-reviewed journals. These include nine SLRs and six MAs that are based on a range of primary studies from six (De Meuse et al., 2009) to 140 (Lai & McDowall, 2014). While not all of the SLRs and MAs focus exclusively on workplace coaching, we still included them because their main emphasis is on workplace coaching and/or differences between student and professional samples are discussed.

Coaching Effectiveness

Regarding coaching effectiveness, we focus on the meta-analytic results. Five of the six MAs sought to determine coaching effectiveness (Burt & Talati, 2017; De Meuse et al., 2009; Jones et al., 2016; Sonesh et al., 2015a; Theeboom et al., 2014). Regarding the overall effectiveness of coaching, all MAs found positive effects. The effects appear to be stronger when self-reported by clients than when assessed by others (e.g., the coach or the client's supervisor; De Meuse et al., 2009). Moreover, the effects' strength varies substantially across MAs, ranging from small effects ($g = 0.10$; Sonesh et al., 2015a) to medium/large effects ($g = 0.66$; Theeboom et al., 2014). The MAs that further differentiate outcome measures adopt different approaches to categorizing them. For example, Jones et al. (2016) apply the taxonomy of training evaluation described above. They found positive effects of workplace coaching on the affective, skill-based, and individual results level, with

effects at the individual results level being stronger than at the affective and skill-based levels. Cognitive outcomes as well as results-based outcomes beyond the individual level were not reported sufficiently in primary studies to be included in the MA. Both Theeboom et al. (2014) and Burt and Talati (2017) differentiate outcomes into coping (e.g., self-efficacy, mindfulness), well-being (e.g., stress), work-related attitudes (e.g., job satisfaction), and self-regulation. They also found positive effects of coaching across all outcome categories although the strength of effects across categories differed between the two MAs. Taken together, while there is robust evidence that coaching is effective overall, the substantial variation in effect sizes both across and within MAs indicates that not every coaching intervention is equally effective (Kotte, 2019). The question therefore arises as to which factors impact upon coaching effectiveness.

Factors Impacting Coaching Effectiveness and their Suggested Theoretical Foundations

We summarize here the factors that have received empirical support through the SLRs and/or MAs and map out the theoretical concepts that have been suggested as starting points from which future workplace coaching research and practice can be explored.

As illustrated in Fig. 1, we identified input, process, and contextual factors that have to date received the strongest research attention and empirical support.
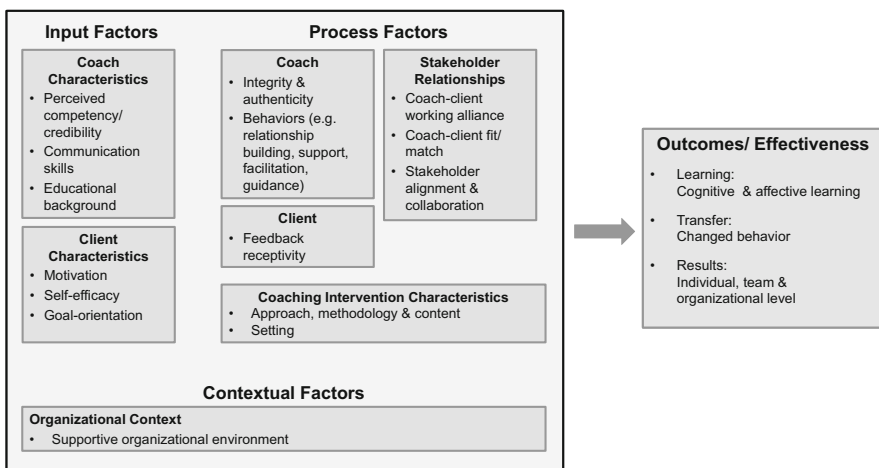

Fig. 1 Charted territories in workplace coaching research

Input Factors

Perceived competency or credibility of the coach has been identified as an important input factor of coaching across the SLRs and MAs (e.g., Bozer & Jones, 2018; Blackman et al., 2016; Graßmann & Schermuly, 2020). Referring to social exchange theory (Cropanzano et al., 2017; Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005), Graßmann and Schermuly (2020) suggested that this construct can be conceptualized from the coach's perspective as their belief in their capabilities to effectively perform their job as coach (self-efficacy; Spreitzer, 1995) and from the client's perspective as the credibility of the coach in meeting their coaching needs. Additionally, Bozer and Jones (2018) suggested feedback intervention theory (e.g., DeNisi & Kluger, 2000) as a relevant framework for explaining coach credibility in terms of a feedback source characteristic.

Communication skills of the coach was also highlighted as an important coach characteristic that drives coaching effectiveness at the outset of coaching (e.g., in the contracting phase) (e.g., Athanasopoulou & Dopson, 2018; Blackman et al., 2016; Pandolfi, 2020). Studies have identified a broad range of skills that are helpful for coaches to bring to the coaching engagement such as the ability to provide feedback, active listening, and empathy.

Educational background of the coach refers to the academic background and associated knowledge that was identified as relevant for coaches in order to conduct effective coaching interventions. This knowledge base includes, for example, knowledge of individual and organizational behavior, psychology, leadership, business, and management (e.g., Lai & McDowall, 2014; Müller & Kotte, 2020; Sonesh et al., 2015a).

Client motivation is the most frequently mentioned client characteristic that has been conceptualized in a variety of ways, such as motivation to be coached and to transfer skills to the client's workplace (e.g., Athanasopoulou & Dopson, 2018), client's commitment to self-development (e.g., Pandolfi, 2020), and developmental change readiness (e.g., Ely et al., 2010). Drawing on the theory of training motivation (e.g., Salas & Cannon-Bowers, 2001), Bozer and Jones (2018) suggested that the various concepts can be adequately conceptualized based on the definition of training motivation, that is, the effort, energy, and persistence that a client is willing to invest in coaching. Drawing on social exchange theory (e.g., Cropanzano et al., 2017), Graßmann and Schermuly (2020) suggested that the client's motivation could be conceptualized as contributing to the process of coach-client exchange of resources in the sense that client motivation may enhance coach motivation and consequently foster a positive coach-client working alliance.

Client self-efficacy refers to the client's sense of their ability to develop and their expectations of generating positive outcomes through coaching (Bozer & Jones, 2018; Ely et al., 2010; Pandolfi, 2020). Drawing on the general learning and development literature where self-efficacy has emerged as a powerful predictor of motivation and performance (Gist & Mitchell, 1992), Bozer and Jones (2018)

suggested social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1982, 1986) as an appropriate theoretical framework for conceptualizing client self-efficacy.

Client goal orientation refers to a client's motivational disposition for interpreting and responding to achievement and learning situations. Engaging in coaching is such a situation and learning goal orientation has been suggested as an important client characteristic that impacts upon both the coaching process and coaching outcomes (e.g., Athanasopoulou & Dopson, 2018; Bozer & Jones, 2018; Pandolfi, 2020). According to the theoretical framework of goal orientation in the training and development literature (e.g., Fisher & Ford, 1998), clients with high levels of learning goal orientation are suggested to be more likely to make consistent efforts, seek feedback, and achieve better outcomes through coaching interventions (Bozer & Jones, 2018).

Process Factors

Coach integrity and authenticity was frequently highlighted as a coach attribute that is essential for enhancing the coaching process (e.g., Athanasopoulou & Dopson, 2018; Blackman et al., 2016; Lai & McDowall, 2014). More specifically, various coach attitudes and behaviors such as honesty, trustworthiness, building rapport, and maintaining confidentiality were proposed as relevant. For example, these were presented as being critical in shaping the quality of the coach-client working alliance, regulating clients' motivation, and influencing clients' feedback-seeking and feedback receptivity. However, the associations between each of these specific coach attitudes and behaviors remain unexamined (Pandolfi, 2020).

Coach behaviors refers to a wide range of behaviors displayed by the coach throughout the different phases of the coaching engagement. These behaviors are aimed at building relationships among stakeholders, providing clients with support and guidance in setting appropriate goals and actions, managing progress and accountability, and helping clients in their learning, development, and goal achievement. The specific coach behaviors that are considered as central during the coaching intervention include active and empathic listening, powerful questioning, reflecting back, providing and seeking feedback, interpreting results, showing a larger perspective, challenging the status quo, and offering practical new actions (e.g., de Haan, 2019; Lai & McDowall, 2014; Müller & Kotte, 2020; see also chapter: Success factors).

Client feedback receptivity has been identified as a central client characteristic impacting upon the coaching process (e.g., Bozer & Jones, 2018; Graßmann & Schermuly, 2020; Pandolfi, 2020). The SLRs used different terms to describe the client's feedback receptivity such as openness to feedback, feedback-seeking, and feedback acceptance. We argue that London and Smither's definition of feedback orientation as "consisting of multiple dimensions that work together additively to determine an individual's overall receptivity to feedback and the extent to which the individual welcomes guidance and coaching" (2002, pp. 82–83) adequately captures

this construct. Bozer and Jones (2018) suggested feedback intervention theory (e.g., Kluger & DeNisi, 1996; Smither et al., 2005) as a theoretical foundation to guide further coaching research into this construct. Additionally, drawing on the sports psychology literature, Theeboom et al. (2014) suggested the construct of "coachability" (Giacobbi, 2000) as a possible framework for exploring the client's feedback receptivity.

Coaching intervention characteristics refers to the overall setup of the coaching intervention or technique-related factors. Certain SLRs (e.g., Athanasopoulou & Dopson, 2018; Pandolfi, 2020) have suggested various factors as relevant that revolve around the coaching intervention's philosophical approach and focus (e.g., systems-psychodynamic, gestalt, person-centered), implementation methodology (e.g., GROW, solution-focused, problem-focused), content (e.g., clients' strengths, learning and skills acquisition, behavior change), and setting (e.g., duration, number of sessions, face-to-face vs. virtual). However, it is important to note that the MAs could not find consistent patterns linking these factors to coaching processes (e.g., Graßmann et al., 2020) or outcomes (e.g., Jones et al., 2016; Sonesh et al., 2015a; Theeboom et al., 2014).

Coach-client working alliance is perhaps the most cited and investigated process factor in coaching. It can be described as the quality and strength of the coach-client relationship and is frequently characterized by mutual trust and respect, honesty, collaboration, and confidentiality (e.g., Athanasopoulou & Dopson, 2018; Bozer & Jones, 2018; de Haan, 2019; Graßmann et al., 2020; see also chapter: Coaching relationship). Drawing on the theoretical construct of the working alliance between therapist and patient in psychotherapy (Bordin, 1979; Horvath & Greenberg, 1989), coaching scholars (e.g., Graßmann et al., 2020; Müller & Kotte, 2020) have defined working alliance as a combination of coach-client agreement on tasks, goals, and strength of bond between them. In addition, Müller and Kotte (2020) also suggested the goal-focused model of coaching (Grant, 2006, 2012; see chapter: Goals in coaching) for conceptualizing the coach-client alliance as a goal-focused relationship. Furthermore, the theoretical concepts of interpersonal trust (e.g., Mayer et al., 1995) and leader-follower trust (e.g., Dirks, 2000) were also adopted as a theoretical framework for the coach-client relationship (e.g., Bozer & Jones, 2018). Finally, social exchange theory (Cropanzano et al., 2017; Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005) was proposed for identifying and investigating specific factors that contribute to the coach-client working alliance.

Coach-client fit/match refers to the degree to which a coach is compatible and aligned with the client's needs (Wycherley & Cox, 2008). The extant literature has focused on identifying matching criteria (such as perceived and actual similarity) and investigating their impact on the coach-client relationship and on coaching outcomes (e.g., Athanasopoulou & Dopson, 2018; Blackman et al., 2016; Pandolfi, 2020). Bozer and Jones (2018) suggested that the concept of interpersonal attraction that is well-established in the psychology, management, and sociology literature (e.g., Hogg & Turner, 1985; Tsui & O'Reilly, 1989) can serve as a theoretical basis for understanding and further investigating coach-client fit.

Stakeholder alignment and collaboration refers to the alignment of multiple stakeholders on key coaching deliverables such as the coaching purpose, methods, measurement criteria, and desired individual and organizational outcomes (e.g., Athanasopoulou & Dopson, 2018; Blackman et al., 2016; Müller & Kotte, 2020). Recently, there is a growing recognition that workplace coaching encompasses a triangular relationship between coach, client, and organizational stakeholders. Consequently, coaching research is moving beyond its traditional dyadic conceptualization of the coach-client working alliance towards a focus on coaching as a social process that is shaped by multiple stakeholders who generate a wider space of power dynamics, politics, and collaboration (e.g., Lai & Smith, 2020; Louis & Fatien Diochon, 2014).

Contextual Factors

Supportive organizational environment refers to the organizational support systems that influence the coaching process and the transfer of learning to the workplace. The SLRs identified various work- and people-related factors that constitute organizational support such as providing resources, assessment and performance data, and transfer opportunities as well as management support and commitment (e.g., de Haan, 2019; Ely et al., 2010; Pandolfi, 2020). The transfer of training model (Baldwin & Ford, 1988) has been suggested as a theoretical framework for examining work environment factors that impact upon coaching transfer such as supervisory support (Bozer & Jones, 2018; Jones et al., 2016; Sonesh et al., 2015a).

Future Research Agenda: Where Do We Need to Go?

Considering the current state of coaching research, what are the "uncharted territories" and avenues for future research?

Our synthesis of SLRs and MAs also points to areas that have either not received enough research attention or have yielded inconsistent findings so far. Among input factors, the coach level of (coaching) experience and expertise as well as client's job characteristics require further investigation, especially in order to move beyond the assumption that "one size fits all" and to identify the effects and characteristics of coaching specific target groups. With respect to process factors, we suggest that establishing taxonomies for investigating coach behavior as in related fields (e.g., psychotherapy or mentoring; Allen et al., 2004; Grawe et al., 1994) would be important to move the field ahead. Regarding the relationship between coaching stakeholders, both a closer examination of the different components of the working alliance (bond, task, goals; Horvath & Greenberg, 1989) and an investigation into the interplay between stakeholders' alignment and the organizational context are warranted. Characteristics of the coaching intervention are particularly

underresearched, as are contextual factors. Given the increasing digitization of professional interactions (as intensified by the Covid-19 pandemic), the comparison of remote and blended coaching settings with classical face-to-face settings is particularly relevant. Regarding contextual factors, the role of the cultural context should be further investigated (Bozer & Delegach, 2019), as should the interplay of contextual factors (e.g., developmental vs. remedial use of coaching by the organization) with coach, client, and intervention characteristics (e.g., regulatory focus and problem vs. solution orientation).

We also suggest theoretical and methodological considerations that may contribute to further advancing coaching research. The design of many primary studies on coaching was not explicitly based on theoretical concepts or frameworks, an issue that is addressed by several of the SLRs and MAs. We argue that a focus on theory-driven research is paramount in order to advance the credibility and quality of coaching research and practice. In particular, coaching research can benefit from the workplace training literature and from sociology when it comes to incorporating the organizational context. It can draw on psychotherapy research with regard to conceptualizing coaching processes (e.g., Bozer & Jones, 2018; Möller & Kotte, 2011).

Methodologically, multi-source data collection is particularly timely for advancing the field. SLRs found that primary studies have significantly relied only on self-report ratings (where the client most frequently serves as the major reporting source). Future research should therefore incorporate data triangulation by collecting data from multiple sources, including assessments from stakeholders in the client's environment (e.g., through multi-source feedback ratings), objective measures (e.g., monitoring sleep quality or blood pressure), and observational data from audio- or videotaped coaching sessions, as is common in psychotherapy research. Moreover, coaching is considered as a continuous process that occurs beyond coaching sessions and has an impact after the completion of the coaching intervention. For this reason, future coaching research requires more longitudinal studies that track how coaching effects evolve over the long term (Fischer et al., 2017), as well as studies that take a micro-perspective on the coaching intervention by tracking and evaluating coaching processes as they unfold over time rather than simply assessing them in retrospect.

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